

FAMILIAR LETTERS

{ ON THE

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By E. S. S.

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NOTICE.

THE materials for the following pages were compiled and arranged several years since, chiefly for the instruction of the younger members of the writer's family preparatory to their confirmation. The MS. having been submitted to the perusal of a clergyman eminent alike for his piety and learning, his favorable opinion persuades the writer to its publication. She ventures to indulge the hope, that to those who by education, faith, or the guidance of reason, are convinced of the authenticity of the Divine Volume, and are firm in the tenets of the Christian faith, this little work may prove useful as a simple exposition of the scriptural principles on which the Church of England is established. To no higher aim than this, to no novel or peculiar views or train of arguments does this volume pretend. The writer deems it necessary to state, that when the notes were arranged in the form in which they are now published, she had not enjoyed the opportunity

of consulting the great standard works of Tomline, Horne, and others on the same subject. Subsequent study of these volumes did not seem to render necessary any material alteration, but with the guidance and assistance of the Rev. Hartwell Horne's tables, the Appendix on the accordance of scriptural prophecy and its fulfilment has been prepared and added to the text.

E. S. S.

Calcutta. February, 1841.

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FAMILIAR LETTERS
ON THE
THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR —————,

PREVIOUS to participating in the holy rite of confirmation, it is the duty of every one, who hopes to benefit by that divine ordinance, to examine seriously the principles of the church in which he has been baptized; that he may judge and determine for himself regarding the truth and justice of its tenets. No one ought blindly to follow a church he does not understand, nor without strict examination take upon himself a professed belief in doctrines he has never duly considered. Such conduct would be absurd in the common affairs of this world; infinitely more so must it be thus lightly to act in spiritual things, in the sight of that God who "is not mocked." It would be wise therefore in all persons deeply to reflect upon the nature of this subject, and with the assistance of our heavenly guide, to inquire into the truth of our church, that before confirmation a decision may be made likely to establish in our hearts, a pure and lasting faith.

It is my intention to lay before you a short account of the sacred rite of confirmation, previously to your being admitted to that important ceremony; and by God's blessing I trust it may be sanctified to your immortal happiness.

Confirmation is a very serious and important rite, and was practised by the Apostles in the first stages of Christi-

anity. It is full of benefit to those who will with due consideration enter upon it; it is calculated to fix a wavering faith, to increase our knowledge in divine things, and to give us infinite encouragement to persevere in the strict line of Christian life. When as infants we were baptized we understood not the sacrament we partook of, and our god-fathers and god-mothers gave for us those promises which in maturer age we are ourselves called upon to ratify. It shall therefore be my earnest endeavour briefly to treat on what appears to me the requisite knowledge for young persons before they are confirmed, simplifying as much as lies in my power, the articles of our church; and may our Heavenly Father, who alone can see into our motives, bless my humble efforts for your improvement, and give you a mind rightly to comprehend the things relating to your eternal peace.

In baptism you were made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven: that is, you had the power given you of becoming all this. In that sacrament your natural sin (or that caused by our common parent Adam), was remitted and blotted out through faith and repentance in Christ; and you had also the power given you of gaining a heavenly reward notwithstanding the original guilt in which you were born, and still continue to have about you. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" therefore in your receiving the sacrament of baptism, by faith and repentance, (the necessary qualification for a worthy reception) the blessed hope is given you of being a member of Christ's holy body and church, "a child of God," and finally, having overcome the world through him, "an inheritor of his kingdom." Without admission into a state of grace this would be impossible, owing to the frailty of our nature and our inherent corruption. But when

these high privileges were offered for your acceptance, it was justly required that you should take certain vows as conditions of God's favour. You were called upon first "to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you would not follow nor be led by them,"—these things were renounced, by your sponsors in your name when you were an infant; you are now to declare your intention to continue the same in your own person, and whether you are willing to ratify the promises then made for you. I beseech you to reflect deeply before you make this solemn vow—for when once made no power can recal it, and it is a tie binding upon you as long as life shall last. It is a serious thing to enter into a covenant with God; do not therefore profess with your lips to renounce these things, whilst in your heart you think no ill in them. He can see into the most secret corners of the soul and cannot be deceived. Of what use can confirmation be to an unbelieving or callous heart?

Secondly: You are called on "to believe all the articles of the Christian faith." Do you *believe*—do you know them? Seriously ask yourself these questions—nor presume to declare your belief in those holy things of which you are ignorant—or how can you "thirdly, keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life?" These are solemn vows—let us therefore inquire into the meaning of them, before you approach the altar of God, there personally to confirm them. It is not merely necessary that you learn the Church Catechism, but that you should understand it, and apply each part to yourself. Confirmation is a great benefit, and wisely instituted for the good of mankind; it affords an opportunity of deep reflection on a subject

which, as we are received in Christ's Church so young, might very possibly escape the serious investigation of many in after years, were they not called upon to recapitulate their baptismal covenant at a maturer age. Young people are usually confirmed at that period, when with lively feelings they are ready to enter on the busy scenes of life, and about to be surrounded by temptations and pleasures too often fatal to their spiritual peace. Here then this excellent ordinance comes in to their assistance, and their minds are prepared for the assaults of the enemy, by a further supply of grace, caused by a firm conviction of truth, and a determination, by God's assistance, to do their duty. To the mind of a true disciple of our blessed Lord, there can scarcely be a higher gratification than to have the opportunity afforded him of declaring before the Triune Deity, before man on earth, and the saints and angels in heaven, a belief of the Gospel, and a determination to spend a life of Christian duty and love, to the glory of God, the good of mankind, and the salvation of their own souls. Remember, my dear ———, "there is joy in heaven," when a lost sinner is brought to the true fold. Can there be a stronger inducement than this to throw off the yoke of Satan and to take upon us that of our Divine Master?

We will now inquire into the articles of the Christian faith, which will be found briefly set forth in the Nicene, Athanasian and Apostle's Creed, and more particularly in the 39 Articles of the Church of England. The first article shall be considered in my next letter, till which time I would earnestly recommend you to study the office of baptism as found in the book of Common Prayer, and to pray to your all-sufficient Creator, who alone can give you a right understanding of these things, and put into your heart a desire to act up to his commands. The Bible

you can never too often, or too assiduously study—let it be your beacon day and night—it will afford you inexpressible delight when you have persevered for some time in this daily duty, and you can never know it too well. Try by its infallible test, all the instruction you may receive on the important subject of religion, and let nothing induce you to believe, or think differently from what it teaches. Be assured that the Bible contains all that is necessary for salvation, and on those points upon which it may be silent or not so explicit as you could wish, yet *believe* with the simplicity of a little child, nor seek with unbecoming eagerness to dive into mysteries which are wisely hidden from our eyes. But when I give you this advice, do not think that I intend you should not endeavour to understand the word of God. All our energies should be employed to comprehend that portion of it which has been revealed, and with unceasing diligence, aided by fervent prayer, must we study, and “search the scriptures.” It is only with regard to those mysteries wherein God has seen fit to require our faith that we are to repress *vain curiosity*, and after deep reflection, we are notwithstanding to *believe*, though we (by reason of our frailty) are still in darkness. I shall defer any further communication till I treat on the first article. Meantime I commend you to our Heavenly Father, and

am,

Your sincere friend,

LETTER II.

MY DEAR _____,

I COMMENCE the delightful and interesting task I have proposed to myself, of endeavouring to assist you in your

search after the true faith, that you may not at your approaching confirmation profess yourself a member of a church into the tenets of which you have not examined. Accordingly it is my wish to direct your attention plainly but seriously to the articles which have been drawn up by the heads of that church in order that all who profess themselves her followers may know what they are called upon to believe, and may sufficiently prove the reasonableness and scripturality of her doctrines. It is impossible but that some errors must ever exist in every body composed of frail and sinful men; but how much more likely would they be to arise and increase were there no fixed articles and bonds of agreement between them! From little and little, faith would fall away and become corrupt, until the very bonds of unity by which Christians were at first connected, would be destroyed and lost. Certain established rules and principles are necessary for the well-being of every community, nor are they less needful in the church. At the time of the establishment of the Protestant religion, when we severed ourselves from the Roman Catholic Church in consequence of the abuses which had crept into it, we endeavoured as nearly as possible to revert to the ancient foundation of the church, as constituted by our Saviour and the Apostles, and to re-establish it in its primitive state of purity and simplicity. It was therefore judged expedient to make and preserve certain articles or bonds of agreement which every member who became a minister of this church should subscribe to. This was first done in the reign of Queen Elizabeth in 1562, and the articles as we now hold them were then drawn up and signed by the archbishops and all the clergy of the kingdom; from which time every succeeding monarch, on his accession to the English throne, has sworn to preserve the church

according to those articles. Since, therefore, these articles instruct us in the doctrines held by the Protestant church, it is highly necessary that each member as soon as he is of an age to comprehend them, should seriously study to understand to what he gives his assent, when he professes himself to be one of that community; and our church, nothing fearing from the private scrutiny of her children, has wisely appointed a time, when she calls upon them, in the rite of confirmation, to ratify the promises made for them by their sponsors at their infant baptism. It is impossible you can better prepare yourself for the rite she urges, than by a due consideration of her tenets. I shall therefore commence with the first article, and may God pour down his blessings upon you to receive, and me to explain the beautiful and grand mystery it contains.

ARTICLE I.

“Of faith in the Holy Trinity.”

Art. I.—“There is but one living and true God everlasting, without body, parts or passions, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of his Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Ho' y Ghost.”

That there is a God, a Creative Power, or First Cause, by whom “were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth,” is the fundamental doctrine of all religion. That such must be the case is too evident to need my long dwelling upon the subject. If we look around us on the wonders of creation, or turn our thoughts inwardly and meditate upon the nature of our

immortal souls, the instinctive feeling even of the savage proclaims a belief in some Supreme Being. We, who are blessed with revelations from God have only to study his word to understand Him as he is ; by that we are informed " there is none other God but one*," and that " God is one†." " He is a *true* God," " God is *true*‡." " Everlasting"—" who only hath immortality," " whom no man hath seen nor can see§." " the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning||." " Without body, parts, or passions." Christ declares " God is a spirit**." " Ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape††." He is called by St. Paul, " the incorruptible God†††." " The king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God§§." " Who liveth for ever|||." " Of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness." St. John in his Revelations styles him, " The Lord God Omnipotent*," and Christ declares, " with God all things are possible†." St. Paul, lost in wonder at the amazing schemes of salvation offered alike to Jews and Gentiles, exclaims, " Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out‡." He declares to the Ephesians that God is, " rich in mercy§," and St. John, who delighted to dwell on the inexhaustible theme of God's exceeding love to mankind, manifested in the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ, says, " God is love||." " The Maker and Preserver of all things

* 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6.

†† Rom. i. 23.

† Gal. in. 20.

§§ 1 Tim. i. 17.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 18.

||| Rev. iv. 9.

§ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

* Rev. xix. 6.

|| Jas. i. 17.

† Mat. xix. 26.

** John iv. 24.

‡ Rom. xi. 33.

†† John v. 37.

§ Eph. n. 4.

both visible and invisible." "All things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made*." "By him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things and by Him all things consist†." And St. John in his vision hears those who have overcome and "gotten the victory over the beast," sing "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints: who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest‡." So far I think the doctrine of this article is clearly established; no ingenuous mind will be disposed to cavil at what can be so distinctly proved from scripture. It remains that we now consider the incomprehensible Trinity, and find whether holy writ will bear us out in the idea we have formed of it, as expressed in the above article of our church. Nor do I fear being able to bring before you sufficient proof for that purpose—far am I from presuming to suppose we can understand *how* it is; but that there is a Trinity—three persons in the Godhead—is beyond doubt. Do we understand the construction of our own bodies? Do we know of what our own souls consist? Yet we do not doubt that we have souls—a something which can accept or refuse, view, feel, and think—in short, a power of mind—reason, or call it what you will: something that raises us above the brutes, and is more or less distinguishable in all the human race, a spirit or divine essence. Surely, then, if we are in such an ignorant state, with regard to the formation of our

* John i. 3. † Col. i. 16, 17. ‡ Rev. xv. 3. and 4.

own bodies, and the nature of the soul which we all feel *confident does exist in us, it is not unreasonable that we should believe* though we cannot understand the Triune nature of our God—sufficient has been revealed for our instruction on the subject—more if vouchsafed to us we could not understand; therefore with childlike simplicity let us “receive with meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save our souls,” and not “seek into forbidden and hidden mysteries.” That such faith is pleasing in the sight of God, my dear ———, there can be no doubt. We will now resume our search, so far as is consistent with faith, and the word of God; and may He bless your endeavours to know Him as He is. Our article proceeds, “in unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” We find this doctrine of three distinct persons clearly revealed at the time of our blessed Saviour’s baptism. “Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Who will say that this is not a clear, positive and sensible revelation? Nor do we ever find it doubted of, or misunderstood, by those who witnessed it. Our Saviour in his last charge to his disciples commanded them, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Constantly do the Apostles use a like form of salutation to their converts, in order, as we may suppose, to keep alive this doctrine in their minds. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the

* Matt. iii. 16, 17. See also Mark i. 10, 11. + Matt. xxviii. 19

communion of the Holy Ghost be with you*." Our *Church Catechism* teaches us that *God the Father creates*, God the Son redeems, and God the Holy Ghost sanctifies. I might go on and multiply texts of scripture, and bring forward additional reasonings for the support of this doctrine, but I conceive that what I have laid before you will be sufficiently strong for conviction; and that is all I wish to effect in your thoughtful mind. Should doubts arise after you have with prayer studied this first article of our faith, believe me, they are the suggestions of that enemy to our peace who is ever "seeking whom he may devour," and trying to puff you up with pride and a disbelief of every thing above your finite comprehension. Pray to that God who is able to see your mind and thoughts—pray to him for strength, for knowledge, and for peace, and he will not withhold his Holy Spirit, which will comfort you, and "lead you into all truth." I am no advocate for your seeking too deeply into the "hidden things of God;" the wish to do so is a mere sign of presumption and pride: but I would have you attain a right knowledge of Him in whom you believe, as far as is allowed to man on earth, and for the rest, which is too wonderful for us, I would have you implicitly believe every thing which can be proved by his holy word. We are all children and less than children in comparison with God; how shall we then presume to dictate to him, or reason with him! I earnestly pray that you may be led to trust in him; to place your unlimited dependance on him. No study, no reading, no teaching can be of any avail without his blessing. Seek it therefore, I earnestly entreat you, by diligent prayer, and lose not sight in all you do, of Him, who will thus become your "wisdom." I add a few texts from the Old Testament for reference

to show its accordance with the New, but remember, our faith is built on the latter. The revelation of the Mosaic dispensation is dark and hard to be understood or practised. Our New Gospel law is light and easy to be borne.

Believe me ever,

Your sincere friend,

Gen. xvii. 1 : Deut. vi. 4 ; vxxiii. 27 ; 1 Kings viii. 27. Isaiah vi. 3 ; Exodus xv. 2 ; Lev. xix 2 ; 1 Sam. ii. 2, 3 ; Job xxxvi. 5 : xxxvii. 23 ; alii. 2 ; Psalms li. 1 ; lxxxvi. 5, 10, 15 ; cii. 26, 27 ; c. 5 ; cxix. 142, 160 ; cxlv. 3 ; cxlvii. 5 ; Mal. iii. 5, 6 ; Isarah xlvi. 15 ; xlvi. 5, 18, 21.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR —————,

THE subject on which I have now to treat is one so important and precious to the soul of every Christian that I cannot too earnestly desire your attention. In fact, on the reception of the doctrine about to be laid before you, depends every hope of the believer ; and when duly considered it cannot fail to awaken in your nature the most exalted love to God, and gratitude to your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You are well acquainted with the fall of man, as described in your Bible—that originally our beneficent Creator formed us pure and perfect, yet giving us the option of remaining so, or not, as we pleased. Or as we denominate this power, He bestowed on us free-will. He did not compell us to be his servants, but after placing before us the consequences of either choice—the advantages of his service, and the sad miseries we should win by deserting it—He left us to do as we would. Tempted by the evil spirit our first parents forsook their allegiance and disobeyed their God. Thus came sin into the world, and death the threatened

penalty of sin was incurred. Death temporal and eternal. What then was to be done? The stern unsoftened law said, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." Our first parents had sinned; and from a corrupted source what could spring but corruption? "sin entered into the world, and death by sin," "for that all have sinned." To destroy all mankind was repugnant to the mercy of God; to forgive disobedience without the threatened punishment, was equally against his justice and truth. In this extremity, this warring as it were, of the attributes of God, his blessed Son came forward and by offering to take man's nature upon him and to suffer in the stead of sinful man, He proposed to satisfy the Divine wrath, and obtain the pardon of all who should sincerely and heartily repent them of their sins. He became "very man," and suffered the punishment incurred in that nature. Being God, He had "right to what reward He pleased as the merit of his obedience; He chose the salvation of mankind. Thus was God reconciled to man by a Mediator, and all who believe and obey him are thus purchased from eternal death. Let us now see how our Church has expressed her belief in this Saviour of mankind.

ARTICLE II.

"*Of the Word, or Son of God, which was made very man.*"

Art. II.—"The Son which is the word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect natures; that is to say, the God-head and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and

very man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

Long had the Messiah been expected, and looked forward to by the Jews, His miraculous birth, and conception, had been clearly predicted and was confidently looked upon. It was consequently no unexpected event when a Virgin named Mary of the tribe and lineage of David, "was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Joseph to whom Mary was betrothed finding her situation, "was minded to put her away privily, but an angel was sent to tell him," "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," adding, "and she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins*," as was declared by the prophet: and when Mary, troubled at the first visit of the angel who came to tell her of the glory that awaited her doubted and asked, "how shall this be?" the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God†." At the birth of this child his divine origin was manifestly declared, for "lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them," (shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night,) "and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid: and the angel said unto them fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the

Heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*." And well indeed might the Heavenly Host celebrate this instance of God's exceeding love to fallen man ! well may every ransomed creature join in the thanksgiving, and swell the choir of the Holy Angels with songs of praise and love !

The equality of the Son with the Father is shown forth by St. John when he says, " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ; the same was in the beginning with God†." We have our Lord's own affirmation, " I and my Father are one‡." " Before Abraham was I am §," and although the Jews at this saying, took up stones to throw at him, the wonderful manner in which he was preserved, then, and at every other time until the season for his suffering was fully come, shows only that they by this means assisted in the proof of Christ's being what he declared himself, the Son of God. Can we for a moment suppose that God would work miracles for the support of the faith of an impostor, and even one who called himself equal with the Father, in all things, his then assumed human nature excepted ? St. Paul bears witness to his being Christ, " who is over all, God blessed for ever . ." " The image of the invisible God**," and says, " In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily††." He took man's nature upon him that he might be able to be a Mediator between man and God. An angel could not have done this ; for they are equally under the law of obedience, although a superior order of Beings. Man

* Luke ii. 9, 10, 11—13, 14.

|| Rom. ix. 5.

† John i. 1, 2.

** Col. i. 15.

‡ John x. 30.

†† Col. ii. 9.

§ John viii. 58.

was unequal to the task, for each man is compassed with infirmity and requires pardon for his individual offences ; his obedience if perfect would be no more than his duty, consequently he could merit nothing from God. It was necessary that the atonement should be made in the same nature, in which the offence had been committed, consequently, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*.” Well might St. Paul, when writing to his beloved Timothy and warning him against useless disputes, tell him, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory†.” This is above our finite capacities, but it is nevertheless a part of our faith, by which we are able to believe “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ‡ ;” and that He “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life § ;” and this was brought to pass at the time appointed by God—not at the moment of man’s fall ; then indeed the necessity of such a sacrifice might have been questioned, but after all other means had proved ineffectual, “when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman ||.” For an account of our Blessed Saviour’s life, sufferings, and death, I must refer you to the history given of it by the four Evangelists ; it would swell this letter too greatly, to enter at large into the subject ; and in the writings of his own disciples, you will find a minute and unprejudiced account of the whole. But while reading

* John i. 14. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 19.

§ John iii. 16. || Gal. iv. 4.

*and meditating upon those sorrows and the painful recital of the sufferings of Him, who "was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," do not, my dear ——, forget that they were endured for you, for your release from death eternal and spiritual. Behold then, has he not truly "purchased" "the Church of God" "with His own blood * :" think on His love, " Christ died for the ungodly," "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us†." Like the Lamb in the Jewish rite, which was indeed a type of Him, " Christ our passover is sacrificed for us†." "That he might reconcile both," (that is Jew and Gentile) "unto God in one body, by the cross §," "who gave himself a ransom for all ||." "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them**," for "He is the propitiation for our sins††." Such is the doctrine contained in this second article of our Church, and wonderful indeed is its truth. Without this interposition in our favor of what avail to us would have been a knowledge of God? Alienated from Him by sin, we could only have believed as do the devils "and tremble," for we could have had no other than "a fearful looking for judgment," but now the case is changed—the promised seed has come, and bruised the serpent's head, and we are ransomed from the curse of the law. But I entreat you to remember that it still remains with ourselves either to be found among the number of the redeemed, or of those, who rejecting the Lord who bought them are still subject to "the wrath to come." No sinner is too vile for the Saviour to cleanse if he comes to him, but if he reject the Intercessor, it is as impossible for that soul to be saved, as it would have*

* Acts xx. 28. † Rom. v. 6, 8. ‡ 1 Cor. v. 7.

§ Eph. ii. 16. || 1 Tim. ii. 6. ** Heb. vii. 25. †† 1 John ii. 2.

been had the Lord of glory not come "to seek and to save that which was lost;" and can it be, that any who can understand what their great Redeemer has done for them, will hesitate to present themselves at his cross? Is it really possible that any will refuse to listen to and obey His commands? Are we not sure that He who has undergone so much for us can never require any thing but what will conduce to our eternal welfare and peace? My dear Christian friend, for such I may surely hope you are, take His "yoke" upon you, it "is easy;" and His "burthen," for it "is light;" and esteem it your privilege to know His commands that you may at least show forth a portion of your love to Him by obeying them. And "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood," "be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen*." I transcribe a few remarkable passages in the Old Testament which afford proofs of the doctrine of the article we have been considering†; and there are many more which might be brought forward, were it necessary, all tending further to prove this point of faith. To the Saviour do I now recommend you, praying that He will of His abundant grace bring you to Himself through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Ever believe me,

Your attached Friend,

* Rev. 1. 5, 6.

† Gen. iii. 15; Isaiah ix. 6, 7; xliv. 6; lin. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.
Jer. 1. 34; Mal. ii. 6, 7, 8.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR ———,

I TRUST your views on the subject of my last letter are so raised above the paltry things of earth, and your heart so filled with the love of your Holy Saviour, that you are not inclined to doubt his power, and desire to perform any act which can be serviceable to his people whom he has bought as his own with the inexpressibly dear price of his blood. I am well aware that you will find in your progress in Christianity much that your finite understanding cannot clearly comprehend ; but this is no just reason for rejecting it. Remember that the love of Christ passeth knowledge, and he hath not scrupled to bear for us all that our sins had deserved. I proceed now to—

ARTICLE III.

“ Of the going down of Christ into Hell.”

Art. III.—“ As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also it is to be believed that He went down into Hell.”

At first sight this doctrine is startling. To believe that the great Lord of life, the Holy God and Saviour of mankind descended into hell, the place of the damned, and tasted their sorrows, for a moment appears impossible ; but when faith accompanies the declaration, it teaches that it is no more in opposition to the glory of Christ for him to bear the whole punishment of sinners, than for him to take upon Himself their nature, and to suffer for them upon the earth. I am well aware that this article is not taken generally in its literal sense. It has been a subject of serious and deep controversy in the Church, and the most learned Theologians have been divided in their views of it. The generally received opinion is that the word “ Hell” here does not mean the place of eternal punish-

ment but an intermediate state into which departed spirits enter until the day of final judgment; and that our Saviour remained in this undetermined place during his absence from the body; and it is believed by those who entertain this opinion that His sufferings *ended* upon the cross. Scripture is silent upon the subject, or at least what it does reveal is too obscure for our present powers of mind to understand. That Christ has worked out our salvation, and bought us from our master the Prince of Darkness is certain; and *how* He accomplished this grand and glorious work we have no right to determine or seek further into, than has been revealed to us. We are reconciled to God from sin *through repentance* for His sake alone, and let this be our praise and glory. The manner of it let us leave till we are in a state to comprehend it. It is too wonderful for finite souls: the angels even desire to look into it, and are not able. Look to Christ alone as your Saviour, and believe that He has accomplished all that was necessary for your eternal happiness, and that you "are complete in Him." Take him as your life, give Him your heart, and He will reveal His will to you by the Holy Spirit; so shall you be for ever His, snatched as a brand from the burning, and ever shine in His kingdom. To Him I would affectionately commend you, and remain,

Your Anxious Friend,

LETTER V.

We are now brought, my dear ———, to the completion of our Lord's earthly career. We have followed Him through His life, and professed our belief in

Him as our Saviour and God. Having done so, and acknowledged Him as perfect God and perfect man, taking our nature upon Him solely for our advantage, we have also seen how, with that blessed end in view, He has undergone the sorrows of the grave, and we come to behold His triumphal victory over death, and sin, and to profess our belief in His resurrection, as our article expresses it.

ARTICLE IV.

“Of the Resurrection of Christ.”

Art. IV.—“Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfections of man’s nature; wherewith he ascended into heaven and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men, at the last day.”

When the disciples were mourning their dead Lord, and the women, having prepared spices to embalm the remains of Him they loved, were coming to perform this last mark of respect, filled with sorrow and grief at their loss; the grand work of man’s redemption was still fulfilling, and the glorious confirmation of our rising to inherit a future life was actually taking place. Overcome by grief the disciples had forgotten, or through unbelief had not understood, His assurance that He would rise again from the dead. Instead therefore of expecting this glorious event they were hard to be persuaded when He showed Himself to them, that He whom they saw was indeed “the Christ.” The holy women who had early sought His tomb on the first day of the week were distressed and alarmed when they beheld the Angel sitting on the stone which he had rolled back from the door of the

sepulchre : " his countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow," in signification of triumph, purity, and glory. " He is not here," said the Angel to the two Marys, " for He is risen as He said : come see the place where the Lord lay*." That He did really " take again His body with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature ; wherewith He ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until He returns to judge all men at the last day," we have abundant authority for believing. Saint Mark tells us, " He is risen," and " after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into Heaven and sat on the right hand of God." In order to prove more especially that it was He Himself, and that it was indeed His human body He had raised from death and re-united to His soul, He appeared to His affrighted disciples several times ; He ate and drank before them ; and when they thought they had seen a spirit, and could not speak to Him for fear, He mercifully satisfied their weak apprehensions and said unto them, " Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself ; handle me and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when He had thus spoken, he shewed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat ? And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honey-comb, and He took it, and did eat before them." " And it came to pass, while he blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven†." This is a positive and sensible proof of our Lord's resurrection and ascension, and that He did indeed rise with His human body ; and in the xxth chapter of St. John's Gospel, you will find a most

* Matt. xxviii. 5, 6.

† Mark xvi. 6.

‡ Luke xxiv. 39 to 43. 51. See also Acts i. 9, 10, 11.

affecting narrative of it with an account of the incredulity of one disciple, Thomas, and our Lord's gracious and condescending manner of expostulating with and convincing him. Forty days, the same number as of His temptation in the wilderness, was our blessed Saviour on earth, after His bursting the bonds of death and the grave, before His visible ascent into heaven. "Him God raised up the third day and showed Him openly, not to all the people" (that would have been but to have subjected him again to insult, and persecution) "but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even unto us," says St. Peter in his discourse to Cornelius, "who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead," and adds. "It is He which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead*." "He hath appointed a day," therefore, "in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead†." "Christ sitteth at the right hand of God‡." And this is no newly planned scheme; it has been so ordered from the beginning, for it is written, "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began§." Since then, He who is our head has risen, there remains no doubt but that we shall also rise, and that we shall appear before His judgment-seat to account for the deeds done in the body. His resurrection is the first fruits of our's. Saint Paul evidently makes one the proof and assurance of the other, for, says he, "If Christ be preached that He rose from the dead

* Acts x. 40, 41, 42.

‡ Col. iii. 1.

† Acts xvii. 31.

§ Acts iii. 20, 21.

how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen*." That He is risen I think I have shown as plainly as texts of scripture can speak. Consequently we cannot doubt that we shall rise and be changed from corruptible beings, to immortal spirits, to receive sentence for our works. The unrepentant to depart from Him, who is life, peace, and joy, and to be for ever miserable; the penitent believer to "inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world," to be for ever with Him who is their life, in glory; to be about the throne of his Redeemer as its brightest ornament; in short to be with Christ in Christ for ever. Contemplate, my dear _____, this blissful, this glorious consummation. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory? O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ†." Yes, glorious indeed is the victory which through Christ is given to us; sinful and weak as we are, His righteousness, is ours who believe, His triumph, ours. Faith, which if genuine must show it-self in works as its fruits, is all that is required of us, and then we shall rise to life immortal in His strength and for His sake. Can we ever sufficiently estimate this privilege? Can we ever love Him enough who has thus overcome all things for us? Oh come to Him, my beloved _____; give Him your heart, or rather permit Him to take his own, which it is, and place your whole hope of eternal life in His hands. He is yours, you are His, and Christ's own will follow Him when He comes in glory. "Therefore, blessed and holy

* 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13.

† 1 Cor. xv. 54-57.

is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ. That such may be your case, do not fail to come unto this Saviour for every thing. He is ever ready and willing to assist you in your course. If you are in doubt, come to Him; we have this assurance, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." If borne down by a sense of sin, come to Him, for He hath said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." If beset by temptations, come to Him "who will, with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." If in misery and affliction, come to Him, who in all His people's "afflictions was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them." So shall you be ever present with the Lord—so will He dwell in you, and you in Him; He will be one with you, and you with Him. This blessedness is yours if you will only learn of Him: if you would be happy accept this loving invitation, "Come unto me." May God of His mercy give you grace and power to obey His summons.

Believe me ever,

Your attached Friend.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR —————.

IN entering on the subject of the fifth article of which I now propose treating, I would wish to call your attention to its being as much a part of our professed faith as any other point of doctrine. I fear the practical faith in the Holy Spirit is but too frequently lost sight of, by those who if seriously asked the question would instantly acknowledge their belief in the Holy Trinity. It is as

necessary to keep in view the Holy office of this person in the Godhead as of the other two. In fact if we believe that the three are equal in their attributes, and form but one God, our worship and faith is imperfect, and void, if we give exclusively to one the honor due to the three. But I will endeavour to prove the divine office of the Holy Ghost whom we have seen in our consideration of the first article to be positively revealed as God in scripture ; and then to enforce the practical service we owe Him.

ARTICLE V.

“Of the Holy Ghost.”

Art. V.—“The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son is of one Substance, Majesty and Glory. with the Father, and the Son, very, and eternal God.”

Let us examine how far scripture bears us out in this view of the Holy Ghost. At our Saviour's baptism He was evidently set forth. He descended in the form of a dove and lighted upon Him as He came out of the water, and John the Baptist, from whom our Saviour had submitted to receive this Holy and appointed ordinance, “ bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him, and I knew Him not : but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost ; and I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God*.” Here was a manifest evidence of the Holy Spirit and His office, to sanctify and anoint, to the service of God.—Our

* John i. 32, 33, 34, see also Mark i. 9, 10, Matt. iii. 16, 17, Luke iii. 21, 22.

Blessed Lord bears witness to this united Trinity and the necessity of the power of each for man's salvation when He commands His disciples, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* ;" and He abundantly exhibits His office when He tells His mourning disciples who grieved at the anticipation of His removal from them, "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him ; but ye know Him ; for He dwelleth in you and shall be in you." "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you†." From this we may clearly perceive it is only to the believer, the Holy Ghost is promised ; He does not descend upon the children of this world, but upon the children of God, to enlighten their minds and comfort their hearts. Christ Himself declares the world cannot receive Him ; it is contrary to His divine influence—can we therefore wonder that it denies Him ? His Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and instructs the disciples of Christ in their knowledge of Him ; for He says, "When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me‡." "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth ; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will shew you things to come ; He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

† John xv. 26.

‡ John xiv. 16, 17, 26.

you*." That the holy Ghost is acknowledged as God equal to the Father and the Son in majesty and glory is proved if we examine the manner in which He is always spoken of in Holy writ. St. Paul bears witness to His divinity when he rebukes Ananias for his falsehood and duplicity in the manner of his pretended freewill offering in laying the price of his possessions at the feet of the Apostles in example of the charity of the first Christians. He says, " Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost ?" " thou hast not lied unto men but unto God†." The Holy Ghost miraculously and visibly descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, in the shape of cloven tongues, enabling them to speak " all languages," as had been promised by our Saviour before His crucifixion, in order to facilitate their difficult task of introducing Christianity, and as a proof of their divine mission. I do not intend presumptuously to limit the power of God in your mind by saying God never will again work a miracle. We know not what in His wi-dom He may see fit to do ; we know He can, and will do what is best, but it is a most dangerous error, and one which many well-meaning Christians have fallen into, the attributing the excitement of a warm imagination to supernatural agency : " The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance :" it is therefore easy to try and discover whether the effects attributed to the Holy Ghost proceed from Him or not." St. Paul charges the elders of the Church at Miletum in these words : " Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood‡." He tells us also

* John xvi. 13, 14. † Acts v. 3, 4. ‡ Acts xx. 28.

that “ the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*.” The office of the Holy Ghost consists also in His intercession for us in Heaven, and His assisting us in our own prayers ; for we are assured “ the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered].” Without His holy teaching and enlightening our minds, we cannot effectually know the things belonging to our peace, for “ the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God].” We shall, I think, require nothing more to enforce the assurance that the reception of the Holy Ghost into our heart, in practice, as well as in theory, is vitally necessary to a saving knowledge of Christianity. “ The body without the spirit is dead”—so is that faith which, although it receives the Father and the Son yet rejects the Holy Ghost. Without His sanctifying influence we cannot be rendered acceptable to God. The Son has purchased our freedom from the curse ; but without the power of the Holy Ghost over our carnal minds and hearts to enlighten us, we shall not see our interest in His blood, nor be enabled to embrace the benefits it sets before us. Each person in the Trinity is essential to the plan of our redemption, nor can we be saved without their conjunctive power, for “ these three are one §.” We owe to the Holy Ghost the same worship and reverence we owe to the Father and the Son, nor do I think in addressing our prayers to God we should

* Rom. v. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

+ Rom. viii. 26.

§ 1 John. v. 7.

*ever lose sight of the glorious Trinity. It is, I firmly believe, in consequence of the too frequent neglect of this person in our worship that we so often fail to obtain comfort and answer to prayer. Receive then, my dear ———, the Divine Trinity simply as we find the doctrine inculcated in scripture. Let the knowledge that it is above your finite comprehension to discover *how* such a Godhead exists, only the more convince you of the height and depth of your divine religion. Be satisfied to take your creed as it is set before you in the word of God, and believe that it is your weak nature which renders it impossible for you to reconcile, or comprehend the eternal and perfect nature of the Deity. By so doing, believe me, you will avoid much that is dangerous to your principles, and detrimental to your happiness; and such faith, such simple and affectionate dependance, such child-like confidence in your Heavenly Father will not fail to reap its reward in the kingdom of the redeemed. Do not divide the Trinity either in your faith or practice. Look to God the Father for protection and blessing here and hereafter, through the merits of God the Son, your dear Saviour, and also through the influence, sanctification and grace of God the Holy Ghost; and may “the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost*.”*

Ever consider me,

Your attached and faithful friend,

———.

* Rom. xv. 13.

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR —————,

Possibly at first reading the 6th article you will feel astonished to find it made a separate point of faith. Accustomed from your infancy to view your Bible as the unerring and holy word of God, you may not as yet have known that there exist those who deny its divine origin, and some also who attempt by traditional stories or imaginative fables to add to its sacred doctrines. These are dangerous errors, and much cause have we to dread their fatal effects when we consider attentively what has been revealed on the subject; and read the awful denunciation threatened against those who shall dare to add to or diminish from its holy pages.

ARTICLE VI.

“*Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*”

Art. VI.—“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the names and number of the Canonical books.

GENESIS.

JUDGES.

EXODUS.

RUTH.

LEVITICUS.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

NUMBERS.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SA-

DEUTERONOMY.

MUEL.

JOSHUA.

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS. THE BOOK OF JOB.

THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRO- THE PSALMS.

NICLES.

THE PROVERBS.

THE SECOND BOOK OF CHIRO- ECCLESIASTES OR PREACHER.

NICLES.

CANTICA OR SONGS OF SO-

THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS. LOMON.

THE SECOND BOOK OF ES- FOUR PROPHETS THE GREAT-
DRAS. ER.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER. TWELVE PROPHETS THE LXXX

*And the other books, (as Hierome saith,) the Church
doth read for example of life and instruction of manners,
but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine
such are the following:—*

THE THIRD BOOK OF ES- BARUCH THE PROPHET.

DRAS.

THE SONG OF THE THREE

THE FOURTH BOOK OF ES- CHILDREN.

DRAS.

THE STORY OF SUSANNAH

THE BOOK OF TOBIAS. OF BEL AND THE DRAGON

THE BOOK OF JUDITH.

THE PRAYER OF JANNAH.

THE REST OF THE BOOK OF THE FIRST BOOK OF MAC-
ESTHER. CABELES.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM. THE SECOND BOOK OF MAC-

JESUS THE SON OF SIRACH. CABELES.

*All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly
received, we do receive, and account them Canonical."*

We who are Christians desire nothing further than the testimony of the revealed word, as our rule of faith and practice; let us see then what that holy word says for it-self, for we are by the Lord Jesus commanded to "search the scriptures*."

The constant companion and friend of Christ when on earth, James (and doubtless he, if any of those who were always with Him, would have known had there

been any thing more required for our salvation, than *what the scriptures teach us*)—*in writing to Christians in general*, mentions, “the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls*.” St. Paul, when he writes to his young disciple, Timothy, in advising him on his ministerial duties, and instructing him how to avoid deceiving and being deceived by the enemies of truth, recommends the scriptures as his guide: “But continue thou,” says he, “in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.” He then goes on to say, for what scripture is intended. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works†.” If this be so, we cannot hesitate a moment to acknowledge that it is indeed sufficient for our salvation. What more can we need? Presumptuous man would seek to look into the hidden and deep things of God; but were his vain curiosity gratified they would be as foolishness to him, for he could not understand them. Can we be more than perfect? Alas! how few of us, my dear ——, have arrived at even a moderate standard of righteousness, and yet we would pretend to wish for more knowledge while we forget to take hold of that already within our reach. If we consider what God tells us regarding adding to or diminishing from His word, we shall assuredly shrink with alarm from the danger into which it leads those who dare to do so. It appears that the Galatians after Paul left them had fallen from the faith

* Jas. 1. 21.

† 2 Tim. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17.

through the influence of false teachers who had come in among them and tried "to pervert the Gospel of Christ." With the greatest anxiety and alarm, St. Paul writes to them solemnly declaring, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*." This is strong language, but not more forcible than the occasion called for. To the Romans, the same Apostle speaks of the Gospel as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth†;" and if it be, we can need nothing more to make our salvation sure. St. John, in his last writings during his exile in the isle of Patmos, in the last inspiration vouchsafed to man, closed his book of visions by saying, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book‡." Such is the awful denunciation pronounced against any who would reject or enlarge the Gospel of Christ revealed in the books contained in the Bible, and you may be surprised to know that any would dare to hazard such a dreadful curse. Alas! such is the frailty of the natural man that he still does and has presumed to tempt his Maker by disregarding His word in every age. Nor less dark are our present times in matters of religion than formerly. We cannot mix with the world without constantly having our ears assailed by infidel doctrines and careless blasphemies. It behoves us, therefore, who profess the cross of Christ to seek diligently for truth, and so to learn that we may "be ready always to give an answer

* Gal. i. 8.

† Rom. i. 16.

‡ Rev. xxii. 18, 19

to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us." The sin which reigns in the world, is the great cause of all infidelity, whether it shew itself by disowning part or the whole of the Scriptures, or by insolently and absurdly pretending to know more than God has told us; while at the same time we are constrained to allow that we do not yet even understand the meaning of what he has given us already. Sin puffs up the heart of the evil man with self-sufficiency and pride, and makes him try to believe, what he hopes, that there is no punishment for the wicked; or that that punishment may be diminished by human means. He is ready and willing therefore to conjure up old fables and traditions, to make up his creed, to pacify his conscience, while he rejects those portions of holy writ which would hold forth a different and more startling doctrine. Let us see what our Saviour Himself says of traditions. Speaking of the Jews, he says, " Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." He adds " in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." We have also God's word delivered by his " chosen vessel," Paul, that such are " accursed." We therefore can do nothing but believe. True if He chose He could add to the revealed word, and again inspire His servants; but we believe the time for this to be ended, and should we ever be induced to doubt, we still possess a sure and certain means of knowing of the doctrine whether it be of God or not, since prayer with disposition to obey His will can never fail to be accepted, and God will never permit His true and faithful children to be at a loss as to the truth. We need never be overwhelmed in our minds as to the truth or falsehood of what we hear advanced. We shall know if we strive for knowledge, and ask for the Spirit. He never has and never

will refuse it to humble affectionate prayer. *It is true* prayer is not always instantly answered. We must wait His time : He may be as though He heard not for a season, in order that he may prove our faith and confidence in Him. It is not that He needs this proof, for He knows our strength and weakness, but to prove us to ourselves and to others ; to teach us our own natural frailty and instability that we may strive more and more for His grace, to rest alone in His strength which is perfected in our weakness, and to others, to be perhaps the blessed instruments of their salvation in shewing forth His glory. And shall we murmur at a little anxious solicitude and uneasiness when so glorious a privilege is bought by it ? Oh let us stedfastly believe and embrace the gospel, assured that no good thing will be withheld from us, far less the knowledge of the truth and the power of discerning God's will. Let the word of God be your guide and turn not aside from it in any wise. That this may be your practice is the prayer of

Your faithful friend,

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR —————,

THIS next is a most important Article, and a point well worthy your attentive consideration ; for if the Old and New Testament do not agree, *then* was not Christ the promised Messiah—" Our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins ;" but if they do agree, then " the Day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." If we can prove that

the Old and New Testament are clearly in unison ; that the one does but confirm, strengthen and explain the other ; then may we wait with confidence for the fulfilment of prophecy, when the Jews, to whom the Mosaic law was given, shall receive the gospel, and acknowledge with joy and gratitude, Christ as their Messiah.

ARTICLE VII.

“ Of the Old Testament.”

Art. VII.—“ The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator, between God and man, being both God and man, wherefore they are not to be heard which feign that the Old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth, yet notwithstanding no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.”

It is impossible for us to take for our guide in such a matter as this any better than that of our Blessed Lord's conduct while on earth. He came to do away what had been merely typical of himself and which consequently His coming rendered useless for the future. He came to relieve man from the curse of the law not by destroying but by fulfilling. “ Think not,” said He to the multitudes on the mount, “ that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets ; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise

pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*" You need only carefully compare the life and doctrines of our Blessed Lord with the predictions recorded in the Old Testament to be assured of the truth of this. I add a table of the Prophecies and Fulfilments† as an assistance to you, in compiling which I have been greatly assisted, and am much indebted to *one* by the Rev. Hartwell Horne. I am confident if you will take the trouble to compare these you will find them convincing and clear to your own mind; and then you will not wonder when you read that our Saviour after His Resurrection exclaimed to His disciples, who were travelling to Emmaus, sad and afflicted at the loss they had sustained, and as yet doubtful and anxious regarding His fate, "Oh fools; and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His Glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." "And He said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened He their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures‡." But you must bear in mind, my dear _____, that without the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, you cannot rightly understand the Scriptures. Even the disciples were blind to many parts till our Lord "opened their understanding," and yet they as Jews had the old law to compare with the new, and had been eye-witnesses of the fulfilment of its predictions in the person of their Master. On many

* Matt. v. 17, 18.

† See Appendix.

‡ Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 27: 41, 45.

occasions did Christ bring forward the Old Testament to prove His mission. He declared to the Jews, “ Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me*,” and commanded them to “ search the Scriptures,” adding, “ for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me†.” Apollas, a certain Jew mighty in the Scriptures, after he had been taught the way of God perfectly, “ for at first” he knew only the baptism of John, “ mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ‡ ;” and St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians explains and shews them how “ that rock” in which their Fathers trusted “ was Christ §.” However when Christ came, He necessarily did away with all those ceremonies and sacrifices which had been given and commanded as types of Him, and consequently there was a “ change also of the law ||.” Many parts of the Old Testament were involved in unavoidable darkness and obscurity in consequence of their ignorance of Christ, and their meaning was thus hidden till our Lord came ; but then was “ the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,” “ made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith**” “ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ††.” Still every Christian, although freed from the curse of the law which said “ this do or die,” is subject no less to the obedience of the moral law. It is true his obedience can never be perfect or merit

* John v. 46.

|| Heb. vii. 12.

† John v. 39.

** Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

‡ Acts xviii. 28.

†† Gal. in. 24.

§ 1 Cor. x. 4.

grace and reward ; but he is nevertheless bound to obey, and as far as lies in his power to keep the commandments. "Submit yourselves," says Peter to his converts, " to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ;" " for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men ; as free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliceousness but as the servants of God*." Think not therefore that Christ's obedience will be sufficient for yours without your own endeavours after godliness. It is only to the obedient and those who strive to keep the law, that his righteousness will be imputed. It was not that the Mosaic law was wrong, but that it was too strict and severe for man in his fallen state, that it was changed by our Saviour for his people. It proves to us *our* inability to be perfect, and so Christ fulfilled it and took upon himself our penalty. Study then attentively this holy law, prove its accordance with the Gospel ; and while you lament the obstinacy of the Jews in rejecting their Messiah, thank God that you have been brought up in the Christian faith, and pray that they also may be brought to see the truth as it is in Jesus.

Your attached friend,

I need not add Old Testament references here, you will find them in the table in the Appendix.

LETTER IX.

The next article presenting itself to our consideration, my dear _____, is that on the Creeds—which word signifies a document containing briefly the several points of doctrine which it is necessary for us to

* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 15, 16.

assent to, or to believe in as members of the Christian faith and Church.

ARTICLE VIII.

“Of the Creeds.”

Art. VIII.—“The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius’s Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostle’s Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.”

It were useless to enter into a Scriptural proof of the points contained in these creeds as it would be only going again over the same ground we have already trodden in the proof of the articles preceding this. If you read the creeds you will perceive they are a sum or collection of the most common and general points of Christian faith to which you will find no difficulty in assenting as a believer in Jesus. It is most useful and necessary that our Church should have this short kind of bond or declaration for its members; that each may learn and remember without difficulty, and the most illiterate be able to give an account of their faith in a few simple words. There is one point which may confuse you in St. Athanasius’ Creed, and which I would have you understand. I mean the condemnatory clauses. This creed does not differ in essential points from the others: it is merely dilated and explained more thoroughly, which if you will attentively consider, you will soon find to be the case; but many have objected to its condemning those who do not hold the same faith, as uncharitable and harsh. Now while I admit that I would prefer that there were nothing in the wording of our Liturgy, which could offend a weak brother, still I cannot see that this really

implies what some at first imagine. We are expressly told we can only have salvation through Christ, and this is all the meaning which is intended to be conveyed. "There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved *," and he "that believeth not shall be damned †." These are strong words, and plain ; the last are those by Christ Himself. I do not for a moment pretend to say, none can be saved but those who have a *knowledge* of Him. Many live and die without an opportunity of hearing of Him, but still those *not* having *rejected* Him, I conceive to be pardoned and received by God through Christ's merits, if they have done their duty as far as they have known it ; for "these having not the law, are a law unto themselves‡," as St. Paul saith of the Gentiles before Christ was manifested to them. It is those and those only who have an opportunity of *knowing* the Christian faith, and wilfully reject Christ, who will perish everlastinglly ; and this is no more than is set forth in the gospel. Thus I hope you will not hesitate at the reception of this Creed which so beautifully and clearly explains the nature of our faith, and of the Christian mystery, "God manifest in the flesh," and the never-to-be-divided Trinity in Unity. Deep and incomprehensible is it to our present understanding, and for this cause it bears undoubted proof of its divine origin, which is far above our knowledge. It teaches us to exclaim with holy Job, "Canst thou by searching, find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do ? deeper than Hell ; what canst thou know ? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea §." And then we turn with wonder and

* Acts, iv. 12.

‡ Rom. ii. 14.

† Mark xvi. 16.

§ Job xi. 7, 8, 9.

gratitude when we reflect that this God will bend an ear to the cries of His children and listen with parental tenderness and patience to their wants. Oh my dear _____, cleave unto this God of wonder and love, and take hold on everlasting life, which is so mercifully, so graciously, held out to you in Christ. That such may be your happy determination, through the assistance of the Holy Ghost is the constant prayer of

Your affectionate and anxious friend,

_____.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR _____,

HAVING considered attentively the preceding eight Articles of our Church, which relate to the first principles of the Christian Religion, and having I trust discussed them to your full conviction, I now address you on the utility and doctrines of those which concern us individually as members of this Church. Before we can repose with any degree of comfort on the blessed hopes held out to us in the gospel, we must learn to feel our need of a Saviour, and our own inability unassisted by Him to attain everlasting life. We have fully proved from Holy Writ the nature of the God who made, redeems and sanctifies us: we have now to learn how His creatures have become obnoxious to Him, and naturally shut out from the joys He designed for them at their creation. We are quite certain He never destined a race of beings for misery, and from His own word we learn that, "God created man in His own image*,"—consequently holy and happy. How then did man become so much

* Gen. i. 27.

the reverse? For that we are lamentably fallen from original righteousness who can deny? We read of Adam's sin of disobedience, and that he thus brought the punishment of death on himself and entailed it on his whole posterity. Let us turn to the article of our Church regarding this all-important subject.

ARTICLE IX.

“Of Original or Birth-sin.”

Art. IX.—“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, phronema sarkos, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence, and lust, hath of itself the nature of sin.”

I ask you, my dear _____, only to look into your own heart, as impartially as your nature will allow you for a conscious proof of the truth of this doctrine. Behold what natural disinclination to “follow holiness,” how much self-denial is necessary for the common and daily occurrences of life—how easily are you offended—how much more frequently disposed to irritate and augment than to soften and appease a quarrel! Is not

this nature? Surely yes—and if our consciences bear witness to this fatal truth, with how much greater security may we rely on scriptural proof. Sin indeed entered into the world, by the fall of Adam, but “death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression*.” This “original sin,” does not merely depend on our following Adam; it is a nature engendered in us from him as his offspring—it is inherent, and makes us very far gone from original righteousness. “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin,” for “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners†.” “In Adam all die‡,” and thus it is impossible but that each person born of his nature and through him, must partake of his sin, and consequently his punishment—yet we perceive this wretched guilt is not *merely* imputed, and inherited through Adam; each of us for himself has the root of evil in his heart, and finds truly that, “that which is born of the flesh, is flesh§;” therefore, “if we say, we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us||.” Even among the regenerated, and enlightened that is, those who having been admitted into covenant with God in baptism, have added to the form, the spirit of the Christian—who are daily striving by faithful prayer and watching, “to enter in at the strait gate,” and to walk in the way which leadeth to life eternal; even the true Christian finds, “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other**;” for we are “by nature the children of wrath††.” “The carnal mind

* Rom. v. 14.

|| 1 John i. 8.

† Rom. v. 12, 19.

** Gal. v. 17.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

†† Eph. ii. 3.

§ John iii. 6.

is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*," and we know "the wages of sin is death†." Thus original sin remains even after we have received Christ into our hearts by faith. It consists not in thoughtlessness and ignorance, but it is the natural man warring against God, and leading us more generally to err in our thoughts and actions, than to behave ourselves in a manner acceptable to God; and therefore we continue to deserve his wrath. "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart and they defile the man, for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies‡." Now though we see the miserable state of man by nature, described by St. Paul with so much truth and humility, "I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not;" "for I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members §." Yet we are not left destitute of hope—thanks be to God, after we have acknowledged our transgressions and are sorry for our sins, we find the comfortable assurance, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ||;" and, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit**." But remember this promise is only for those who, "walk in the spirit," and thus do not, "fulfil the lust of the flesh†|." If you

* Rom. viii. 7

|| Mark xvi. 16.

† Rom. vi. 23.

** Rom. viii. 1.

‡ Matt. xv. 18, 19.

†† Gal. v. 16.

§ Rom. vii. 13, 22, 23.

do not feel your utter helplessness even, "to think any thing as of ourselves*", if you do not know yourself an individual sinner, obnoxious in your own person to eternal wrath, not merely with the rest of mankind, "generally included under sin," but really a being who has offended against the laws of God, and become liable to the curse, you cannot feel your need of a Saviour. Far am I from thinking every human being is equally guilty and lost in the sight of God; but this I do think, that the clearer our view of God's holy nature and purity, the deeper will be our sense of the heinousness of sin, and the more shall we see our sins, and abhor ourselves for them. This feeling among many sincere Christians has perhaps led, (from want of being properly defined,) to enthusiastic and vain-glorying self-condemnation, bringing on itself the just punishment of ridicule and contempt. The point is perhaps difficult to settle; how far we may express to others, the humiliating truth which troubles the real believer as to original and universal sin in his heart: let the knowledge of it be sufficient before God, and to Him bewail it, and if called on to profess your belief do not shrink from confessing it; but let not your good be evil spoken of. Do not be constantly bringing forward this doctrine either as an excuse for your omittance of duty; or in ostentation and pride when you have by the divine assistance, done well. Remember that sin is sin, and hateful in God's sight. You are commanded by your Lord and Master Jesus Christ, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect†," and so far as you fall short of this perfection, so far are you from performing your duty. Let those who deny original or birth-sin account for their constant failures

* 2 Cor. iii. 5.

† Matt. v. 48.

in leading a perfect life. Let them say why Christ came to fulfil a law which in the former state of man was given him, and he could keep; and let such reflect how great must be the sin and how necessarily severe the punishment for their want of conformity to the will of their Maker. From the consideration of this leading point of faith, I conceive the humble Christian may derive comfort; for while he must abhor his natural disposition, he is taught by the Spirit to look from himself to the merits of his Saviour who alone can present him pure and acceptable to the Father through the medium of his own obedience and suffering. Let me entreat you, therefore to study impartially this doctrine, and while you feel your own weakness, pray for the divine help that you may not indulge in any known sin; for it is as obnoxious to eternal wrath though you are regenerated, as it was before you knew the way of truth. And may you be directed by the Holy Spirit in your meditations, to whom with the Father and the Son you are commended by,

Your faithful friend,

Refer to Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21; 1 Kings viii. 46, Ps. xiv. 2, 3; Job xiv. 4; xxv. 4; Jer. xvii. 9; Ecel. vii. 29.

LETTER XI.

MY DEAR —————,

THE next leading point of doctrine set forth by our Apostolic Church is that of free-will, a subject which *has* caused and *still* causes much dispute among professing Christians, perhaps chiefly because it is seldom examined with holy writ. You may frequently hear this and the

doctrine last under our consideration canvassed and disputed on ; they appear often to be talismanic words of division : whereas were they reasonably and calmly argued they would resolve themselves into the general belief of Bible Christians. Much of this disputing and division arises I fear from the natural weakness and pride of man ; too weak unassisted to take in clearly the mysteries of godliness ; and too proud to allow that others understand as well or better than himself. Instead of disproving, I should say, this was a forcible proof of man's original sin and determinately bad free-will. However we will now look at the article itself.

ARTICLE X.

“ Of Free-will.”

Art. X.—“ The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength, and good works to faith and calling upon God ; wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.”

Of ourselves, (being naturally inclined to evil,) we cannot be supposed to be able to form a desire, much less to execute the resolution of turning to God by faith. Our good works, if such they may be called, which spring out of the impulse of natural feeling, can have nothing acceptable or pleasant to God ; they doubtless, (such as feeling for the wants of our fellow-creatures, living amiably with others, &c.) are not displeasing, but they cannot call for reward, being done wholly from a love of self ; but it is when we control the natural waywardness of violent passions, when we practise self-

denial and restraint, when we seek to do good because it is God's command and our duty, it is then, that we may be said to do works acceptable and pleasing to God. Now my dear _____, this you will readily admit is no easy task ; we cannot do it of ourselves ; we cannot constantly restrain quick feelings, nor bring into subjection a high spirit, nor prefer the will of others to our own, from a sense of prudence or any other consideration. It requires the divine aid, nor can we even seek that aid without His assisting Spirit working in us. That it is offered to all the justice of God requires, but that all do not accept it, we see daily lamentable proofs. Christ himself taught us our need of this assisting and preventing grace, and that at no time could we do without it. "Abide in me," he says, "and I in you ; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches ; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing*." "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him†." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned‡." Again, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost§," and this cannot be done by unassisted nature. St. Paul further tells us, "they that are in the flesh," that is, who have not the Spirit of God influencing their words and works, "cannot please God||." Surely this is conclusive evidence of the truth of our article, "we have no power to do

* John xv. 4, 5.

¶ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

† John vi. 44.

|| Rom. viii. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us." In speaking of his ministry, this exalted Apostle testified and said, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves," and adds, (by faith in Christ) "but our sufficiency is of God* ;" and, "I know that in me, (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing†." St. John, speaking of his blessed Master, declares that, "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name‡," thus intimating that grace and salvation were *offered* to all and to those who, "received Him, he gave power to become the sons of God," showing plainly that without this power from above they were not able to *be* accepted. St. Paul ascribes his conversion of Lydia to the power of God, "whose heart the Lord opened§." In vain would Paul have preached—in vain reasoned if the preventing grace of God by Christ had not assisted and prepared her heart ; and if we acknowledge that this power is necessary, how can we deny our inability of ourselves to turn unto Him? The same arguments put forth, the same mind to apply them, and yet oftentimes failing ;—where is the cause of this great mystery ? that this preventing and assisting grace is not always received and listened to, nevertheless it still remains our own fault ; we have it offered, and we have the power of accepting or refusing it, called Free-will, within ourselves ; and blessed indeed may we account those who, using this free-will "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, remembering that it is God which worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure||." And others may bear witness in the words of

* 2 Cor. iii. 5. † Rom. vii. 18. ‡ John i. 12.

§ Acts xvi. 14. || Phil. ii. 12, 13.

St. Paul, " You hath, he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins*." I earnestly trust I have made this plain to your mind, that you rightly perceive your own inability unassisted by Him to please God, either in word or deed ; and yet do not mistake the doctrine, so as to consider that this power is partial or irresistible ; that would be to accuse the just and righteous Lord of injustice and cruelty ; it would be to make Him a tyrannical Governor. We must not think unworthily of our God, nor confuse His attributes. He has put it into the power of all to be saved ; He offers to *each* grace and salvation ; but He does not force or compel any individual to accept it ; did He act thus, He would rob man of his free-will and thereby do away with the reward or punishment of another world ; for why should a man be rewarded or punished for what he could not help doing ? He mercifully offers a sufficient portion of the Holy Spirit to enable each of us to embrace and believe the Gospel, and adds to the believer much more than he asks and prays for. To those who reject His proffered love, He does not give it to be abused but leaves them till they will accept it, and seldom indeed is it that He takes from any, even the most reprobate, the power of becoming penitent. I trust this explanation renders the point clear and satisfactory. If not pray to God for his spirit of wisdom to direct you, " who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ;" and you will be guided into all truth.

Believe me, your attached friend,

Refer to Jer. x. 23 ; Prov. xvi. 9 ; xx. 24.

* Eph. ii. 1.

† Jas. i. 5

LETTER XII.

MY DEAR ———,

THE subject of our next study is in its nature so truly comfortable and interesting to the Christian, that after having led you so far into the doctrines of the gospel I need scarcely solicit your earnest attention to it. You will feel disposed and anxious I should hope to find out what ground you, in common with every fellow child of Adam have, for the expectation of forgiveness from God and eternal happiness in a world to come. You have clearly seen that God cannot look upon iniquity, that He will not admit a creature who is unholy into His presence, and you also have proved from His word that "there is none righteous, no not one*." You have found both by experience and from the Scriptures that there is an inherent corruption dwelling within every child of man, and that "how to perform that which is good I find not †." What then is to be done? Holy we must be before we can enter into the world of perfection and bliss, yet sinful, imperfect, corrupt in our own nature, we are, and ever shall be. This becomes a serious and awful consideration; without help we are inevitably shut out from everlasting happiness. But behold! the love of God. Christ appears for us, not only as our mediator but "our righteousness." "To whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification‡.

ARTICLE XI.

“Of the Justification of Man.”

Art. XI.—“We are counted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings, wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.”

We sinful erring creatures are counted righteous before God through that Saviour who died for us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*,” for “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast†,” and “therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith, into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God‡.”

It is not possible that our imperfect works should deserve the favour or grace of God. “By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe;” “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,” “that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

† Eph. ii. 8, 9.

‡ Rom. iii. 24, 25.

in Jesus*.” Herein truly is love, mercy and justice blended together, the sins of man remitted through Christ by repentance and faith in His name, such was His own declaration†, and St. Peter obeying this injunction of His master, said to the people, who at his first preaching after Christ’s resurrection “ were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost‡.” To him who rejects this important justification, “ Christ is become of no effect;” “ whosoever of you are justified,” (that is think to be so,) “ by the law; ye are fallen from grace; for we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love§.” “ By Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses||.” “ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth**,” and this through his taking upon Him our nature. “ He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;” He not only took the infirmities and sorrows of a life of humanity but our sins, for thus alone could we “ be made the righteousness of God in Him††,” if it were possible that we could justify ourselves then “ if righteousness” thus “ come by the law then Christ is dead in vain††,” but now being justified freely by Christ, “ ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in

* Rom. iii. 20—26.

|| Acts xiii. 39.

† Luke xxiv. 47.

** Rom. x. 4.

‡ Acts ii. 37, 38.

†† 2 Cor. v. 21.

§ Gal. v. 4, 5, 6.

†† Gal. ii. 21.

the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God* ;" and this is a blessed state for the humble Christian : still conscious of sin and infirmity, from what other source could we find consolation ? Where but in this imputed justification find security ? Alas, my dear _____, the state of those who wish to be saved by their own works or their own deservings, is lamentably perilous. If these things are so, if God has declared that only for His Son's sake and through Him will He be reconciled to man, who can hope for acceptance by any other way ? If we could justify ourselves what need have we of Christ ? But all we do, all we think, all we even resolve, is so connected with sin, so imperfect, so weak, that by the grace of God subduing our pride and permitting us to see it in its true light, we are aware of our own inability, in short, of our best endeavours being so defective that, but for the sanctifying medium of Christ's merits, we should only bring ourselves nearer and nearer to a state of eternal misery ! Seek then the all-sufficient strength of Christ ; look only to Him as your means for acceptance with the Father, but do not so far mistake the nature of His justification as to suppose you may relax in your utmost efforts after obedience. True faith is known by its fruits—a dead faith will not save you : " the devils also believe and tremble †," be not therefore like unto them. " For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. " Lose not sight of this leading feature of Christianity, nor confuse it. You are justified in God's sight only through Christ's righteousness being imputed to you *if you believe*, but that belief must produce *works*, and you must never relax in the most strenuous exertions after holiness. Those alone who strive will enter into heaven. Christ justi-

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

† Jas. ii. 19.

‡ Jas. ii. 26.

fies *them* but not such as lead ungodly lives, and leave all for Him to do. They cannot understand or wish for holiness who do not seek to become as much so as possible in their own persons.

Believe me, your anxious friend,

Refer to Ps. cxlii. 2; Job ix. 2; xxv. 4; Isa. xlv. 25.

LETTER XIII.

ON reading the next article, my dear ———, you will instantly perceive that it is a necessary companion to the last; indeed it appears most intimately connected with it, and we are led imperceptibly from one to the other. If we are justified freely through Christ,—the question suggests itself, are good works or endeavours after a good life necessary, seeing they account nothing of themselves towards our final redemption? If Christ has done all, why need we work? I hope quickly to put to silence the ungrateful, the sinful suggestion of our own evil hearts.

ARTICLE XII.

“ *Of Good Works.*”

Art. XII.—“ Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, in so much that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.”

It is impossible for a member of the Holy Jesus to feel satisfied to “ continue in sin,” which in its nature is hateful and opposed to Him. The very fact of its

being displeasing in His sight, would be sufficient to lead a soul dependant on, and bound to Him by every tie of love and gratitude, to forsake it. Does it not follow naturally that if we love a person, we instantly learn to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates ; and can this be so towards earthly ties and less so towards our God, from whom, and in whom, alone, we have every blessing, earthly and heavenly ? This feeling is not only to be expected on these grounds, it becomes a necessary consequence of faith, true faith. St. James clearly explains it, " faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone ; yea a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works ; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works ; For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*." " What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ; and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ?" " Ye are the temple of the living God." " If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth ; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." " Every man that hath this hope in Him," therefore, " purifieth himself even as he is pure§." " A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ ." and it is only through Him that our works are accepted : for, " we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works**," consequently not belonging to Him and having no part in Him, if we have not good works. St.

* Jas. ii. 17, 18, 26.

§ 1 John iii. 3.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16.

|| Gal. ii. 16.

‡ 1 John i. 6, 7.

** Eph. ii. 10.

Paul, anxious for the correct and pure worship under Titus his “son after the faith” wrote to him, “These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works*.” To the Hebrews he writes, “To do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,” and he earnestly prays that, “the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,” would make them, “perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ†.” Our blessed Lord constantly insisted on good works as *proofs of the faith* of His people; and even assured them, “Hercin is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.” “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name He may give it you‡.” Here you see Christ makes our good works a condition of being heard by his Father. In another place He asks the reasonable question, “Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?” and declares, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them§.” He has elsewhere graciously told us that He will “reward every man according to his works||,” thus mercifully intimating His acceptance of our imperfect service, and His requiring our labour as a proof of our faith: but added our Lord, “when you have done all, those things which are commanded you, say; We are

* Titus iii. 8.

§ Matt. vii. 16, 20.

† Heb. xii. 16, 20, 21.

|| Matt. xvi. 27.

‡ John xv. 8, 16.

unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do* :" we cannot do more ; we cannot do all our duty ; therefore we have no claim for reward, it is the free gift of God ; we must do every thing in our power, still are we then far, very far, from having kept the law : we require all the mercy and pitying love of a tender Father to receive with pleasure our works. " Where is boasting then?" Let your dependance be on Christ, and Him alone, sanctified to you by the power of the Holy Ghost which will influence you to " obey the truth," and, " by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality† ;" and, " let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven‡ ;" and never let that mercy which has been vouchsafed you in Christ Jesus, influence you to neglect your dutiful worship and service to your God shewn by a watchful care, " in word or in deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." To the ever blessed Trinity do I recommend you, earnestly anxious that neither in doctrine nor in practice you may be found wanting at the day of judgment when, " they that have done good," " shall come forth, unto the resurrection of life ;" but they that have done evil, " unto the resurrection of damnation§."

Ever believe me, your attached friend,

Refer to Ps. lxii. 12 ; cxix. 32 ; cxlii. 2 ; Prov. xxiv. 12 ; Jer. xxxii. 19 ; Ezek. vii. 8, 9 ; xxiv. 14.

* Luke xvii. 10.

† Rom. ii. 7, 8.

‡ Matt. v. 16.

§ John v. 29.

LETTER XIV.

AGAIN, my dear ———, do I address you on what might justly be called another part or link of the same subject, so closely united have been the four preceding articles, and still as much so is the following.

ARTICLE XIII.

“ Of Works before Justification.”

Art. XIII.—Works done before the grace of Christ and inspiration of His Spirit are not pleasant to God forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather for that they are not done as God hath willed, and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.”

The same arguments which I have applied to the doctrine of our justification, and good works, will hold good for this. The original sin inherent in us renders it impossible that we should perform any one *perfect work*, and consequently we cannot *deserre* grace; we cannot *merit* reward. It is only when our works are done in faith in Jesus Christ that they can be pleasant to God. It is for His sake, and through His merits they are accepted; for it is only in this way God has commanded they should be done; therefore, any other manner of performing them must have the “ nature of sin.” Sinful by nature, what we do must be so too. “ A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit,” “ a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a

corrupt tree bring forth good fruit*." Our good works consist in their being done by *faith in Christ*, for " without me," he saith, " ye can do nothing†." " We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, as it is written, " there is none righteous, no not one." " Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law," " that every mouth may be stopped and all the world ~~may~~ become guilty before God;" " therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. For all ~~have~~ sinned and come short of the glory of God‡." ¶ If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God." " Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works§." If our actions could be so perfect as to *merit* justification, then why did St. Paul bewail his nature and say, " I know that in me, (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing ||." What does he mean by saying, " the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God¶." If it were so, if before the grace of Christ be given us we could please God, of what use is His grace to us? Be assured God would never thus throw away His gifts. He would not offer us this power were it not absolutely necessary for us in order to the attainment of righteousness. We are helpless by nature—fallen from a state of purity to one of universal corruption, and from a corrupted source, what can spring but corruption? " By grace are ye

* Matt., vii. 17, 18.

§ Rom. iv. 2, 6.

† John xv. 5.

|| Rom. vii. 18.

‡ Rom. iii. 9, 10, 19, 20, 23.

¶ Rom. viii. 7, 8.

saved through faith," saith St. Paul, " and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast* :" " whatsoever," therefore, of good you are enabled through the spirit to " do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him†," and then rest satisfied that, " not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour‡;" and remember that " without faith it is impossible to please Him§." It were needless for me to dilate more on this article, the point has been so much urged in the preceding ones that I should hope you are well convinced of its truth. Believe me if you find any difficulty in removing the inclination to personal merit, the cause is the inherent pride of human nature, which is ever seeking to know more or to be more than the express word of God teaches us it is. We all fancy we must do something to inherit eternal life, whereas our part is only to *repent and believe*. True faith will produce good works as naturally as a " good tree will bring forth good fruit :" our good works are necessary, but they deserve nothing, being after all but our duty, and then only a part of it; neither before nor after justification therefore can they be meritorious ; and forasmuch as before it they have not the blessed Saviour's righteousness to cover them, nor are done by faith in Him, they cannot be accepted nor pleasant to God. Hold fast your faith, my dear _____; cease not to pray for a right understanding in all these things, and remember how responsible you are having known the true way to

* Eph. ii. 8, 9.

‡ Titus iii. 5, 6.

† Col. iii. 17.

§ Heb. xi. 6.

walk in it, "sober and righteously." "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*." "Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer†," and then be assured you will not be, "cast out." Prayer is above all other means efficacious, and to be trusted; for it turns the Hand which turns the universe. Behold its effect even in the case of Ahab‡; doubtless his prayer was at the moment sincere, for it was heard and granted: trust then confidently to prayer. I do not say you are to expect every petition to be granted which may concern your worldly wishes. God frequently denies, out of mercy; knowing far better what is really good for us than we do ourselves. But in spiritual things "have boldness," for He will never refuse to His children what is for their eternal advantage. "Covet earnestly the best gifts§," and be not puffed up with self-conceit; "be humble," "give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall]."

Believe me ever your sincere friend,

Refer to Gen. viii. 21; xv. 6; Deut. xxxii. 20; Job xv. 14; Ps. li. 5; cxxx. 3; cxlii. 2; Isa. liii. 6; lxiv. 6.

LETTER XV.

MY DEAR —————,

WE are still on the subject of personal merit or works; so prone is man to lay hold on every thing which may

* 1 Pet. i. 13.

§ 1 Cor. xii. 31.

† 1 Pet. iv. 7.

|| 2 Pet. i. 10.

‡ 1 Kings xxi. 29.

augment his pride, that it has been wisely done of the compilers of the Articles of our Church, to notice with the utmost strictness aught which might be taken up or arise to injure its beautiful simplicity and Apostolic purity. After having, therefore, set forth the necessity for good works, and explained their nature, they set proper bounds to their efficacy by

ARTICLE XIV.

“Of Works of Supererogation.”

Art. XIV.—“Voluntary works besides, over and above, God’s commandments, which they call works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety; for by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God, as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required, whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, we are unprofitable servants.”

The absurdity and impiety of such arrogance must, I am assured, instantly strike you. Our Lord commands us, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven, is perfect*.” Can there be more than perfection? What is it to be perfect? Is there a higher kind of superiority—not that every one must necessarily arrive at the same degree, that be far from God to require. To some He gives one, to others two, to others five talents. Those having but one are not expected to gain other two, nor those with two, to gain other five†, but from each is required as much as he is capable of gaining; consequently what is duty in one may not be required in another, who is equally accepta-

* Matt. v. 48.

† Matt. xxv. 14, 23.

ble to God, as the more talented are with all their extensive gifts improved to the uttermost. Each must do all in his power. Where then are works of supererogation? Again, our blessed Saviour saith, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind**;” and to exclude all personal merit, He also tells us, “a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven†.” We are to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God†.” Does this leave any room for more? Humility is the fit clothing of lost, sinful, weak man, who has nothing but what is given him, and can do nothing but what he is enabled to do by a superior power. What does our Saviour say of the Pharisee who boasted of his exact performance of rites and ceremonies and his obedience to the law? Does He not prefer the poor self-condemned publican who “smote upon his breast saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. I tell you,” said our Lord, “this man went down to his house, justified rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted§.” And further He reasoned with his disciples and proved to them by their own habits and ideas, how that God is not bound to receive or be thankful for our services, were they ever so perfect. He asks them, if they considered a master was to be thankful to a servant, because he did the things commanded him. He adds, “I trow not; so likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to

* Luke x. 27; also Matt. xxii. 36—40.

† John iii. 27. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1. § Luke xviii. 13, 14.

do*." I think we have proved the wickedness, presumption, and absurdity of such a doctrine, unhappily in use among the Roman Catholics. If we could indeed make retribution for our sins, and then perform works, over and above what was necessary, then might we say we had whereof to glory, and might ask of God to accept them for another, but this carries with it the proofs of its own absurdity and sinfulness. If I have in any way convinced you of the truth of the foregoing articles, on original sin, justification, and works before justification, I feel assured more need not be argued on this point, and may you be confirmed in the truth by your researches.

Ever your friend,

Notice Gen. vi. 5, 6; Deut. xxviii. 20; Isa. liii. 6; lvii. 12; lxiv. 6.

LETTER XVI.

MY DEAR ——,

THIS next article of our Church still appears to be a continuation of the same subject, being not only intended to show Christ's perfection, but also even more fully to prove our imperfection. After having shown what the nature of man is, how prone to sin, that his, "heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that his thoughts are only evil continually;" and seeing that Christ took our nature upon Him, and became man; it becomes necessary for His glory and for our rightly perceiving of Him, that we should clear Him from a participation in sin; otherwise he is no more able to

* Luke xvii. 9, 10.

save us than we are to save each other. Here then is a crying necessity for the subject of our fifteenth article

ARTICLE XV.

“ Of Christ alone without sin.”

Art. XV.—“ Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh and in His spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world. and sin, as St. John saith, was not in Him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things ; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Let us first see what Scripture informs us of the nature of our Redeemer, the man Christ Jesus. “ As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil*,” again, “ We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin†.”

Blessed assurance ! If he had not been, “ like us,” tempted, “ in all points” alike, He could not have felt for us ; if He had not been, “ without sin,” He could not have saved us—His obedience and suffering would not have been meritorious ; but He is described as “ holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens,” and “ who needeth not daily” “ to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the

* Heb. ii. 14.

Heb. iv. 15.

people's; for this He did once when he offered up Himself*, and, "if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself†." Christ declared of Himself, and how truly let His holy life bear witness, "the Prince of this world" "hath nothing in me‡." John the Baptist, the appointed messenger and forerunner of Jesus exclaimed, when he saw him coming to him, "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world§." St. Peter tells us, Christ "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth||." St. Paul says, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin**," but for ourselves we know that, "in many things we offend all††," and "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us‡‡." Let us then look steadfastly to Him for salvation, and depend confidently on His merits, knowing, "that He was manifested, to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin§§ :" and feeling, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things; as silver and gold," "but with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot|||," such may our confidence be, such is our "Master," "Lord," "King," "Redeemer," "Mediator," our "Righteousness," "our Glory"—to Him let us ascribe all glory, and acknowledge that unto

* Heb. vii. 26, 27

* * 2 Cor. v. 21.

† Heb. ix. 13, 14, 26.

†† Jas. iii. 2.

‡ John xiv. 30.

‡‡ 1 John i. 8.

§ John i. 29.

§§ 1 John iii. 5.

|| 1 Pet. ii. 22.

|||| 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Him be the praise that we are saved in any way from the wrath to come.

Lay hold on this glorious redemption, my dear _____, by active and lively faith, praying with all supplication "if by any means" you may "attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though" you "had already attained, either were already perfect," but "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*."

I am, most anxiously your friend,

See Isa. xl. 25; xlvi. 5; liii. 9; Mal. ii. 6.

LETTER XVII.

MY DEAR _____,

HAVING observed upon the necessity of good works, the heinousness of sin, and its peculiar hatefulness in the eyes of God; after seeing how much assistance God has graciously afforded to us to overcome sin, and to lead a life of righteousness; it becomes a matter of deep inquiry (seeing the inability even of the regenerated to keep a perfect obedience) how far we may hope for pardon. We read that "the wages of sin is death†," that "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them‡;" and although we are redeemed from that curse through Christ, yet we read that "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him;" and again, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in Him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God§."

* Phil. iii. 11, 12, 14.

† Gal. iii. 10,

‡ Rom. vi. 23.

§ 1 John iii. 6. 9.

Here is an awful consideration, for we are not able to keep the pure way of God undefiled. God is not unjust : consequently these words must have a meaning which on first reading we do not perceive. May we not consider that they allude to the wilfully remaining in known sin ? for that is indeed incompatible with the law of Christianity. Let us see what our article advances on this head.

ARTICLE XVI.

“ Of sin after Baptism.”

Art. XVI.—“ Not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin, as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.”

It appears from this view of the subject, that it is not denied but that we may fall into grievous sins, even after we have received the gift of the Holy Ghost in baptism : that we may depart from the right way and bring ourselves into a dangerous situation as regards God’s favour ; but that still it is not against the divine justice and mercy, to renew us after deep, and sincere repentance ; and again to allow us the influence of the Holy Spirit to guide, assist, and comfort us. By deadly sin is here meant sin of a deep nature, sin of committance in opposition to sin of ignorance, or heedlessness—sin of deliberation, that is, committed even when our conscience

accuses us ; and perhaps even in defiance of the direct will of God written in our hearts—such sin leads our souls into imminent peril ; and bitter indeed must be the repentance which may hope for forgiveness, but still it is not unpardonable—it is not that “*sin against the Holy Ghost.*” Of that we read, “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men : and whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come*.” These are our Lord’s own words, and it behoves us to try to understand them lest we fall into the sin of despair without cause, from a misconstruction of their meaning. Many are so alarmed at this awful denunciation that they almost fall into a sin nearly allied to the one they so much dread, by denying the power and goodness of God to pardon their weaknesses. If we consider the occasion of our Lord’s observing upon this grievous sin we shall perceive it was a blasphemy which the Jews committed when He performed His miracles by ascribing the power He used to the power of Beelzebub, and thus giving the glory of God to the prince of the devils. The influence of the Holy Ghost was the power which God vouchsafed to man for his conviction, and he who denied that power could have no further claim for salvation—this utter rejection of God and His power, and ascribing the wonders He worked to the evil spirit, is then the sin “against the Holy Ghost.” It is generally supposed that we cannot at this period of time commit it, and strictly speaking we cannot—for miracles being ended, we have no opportunity of giving that glory and praise

* Matt. xii. 31, 32. See Mark iii. 28, 29, 30.

to the devil which they ought to produce in us towards God ; yet it becomes a question, and a very serious one, how near we may approach to it by rejecting the power of God in our hearts, refusing to accept Christ as our redeemer or living (after we know the way of righteousness) as if we were “ without God” in the world. It is certain that “ Christ’s blood cleanseth from all sin,” but if we *refuse* to be cleansed by it, it is not efficacious to us. To ascribe the wonders of the creation to chance, to deny the power of God to raise the dead, or in fact to limit His power in any way is to think unworthily of Him, and may I think be considered as an approach to this unpardonable sin, but the humble, timid believer who fears to offend, is the least likely to be thus near danger, if we except the despairing of God’s pardon, for that indeed is near to refusing to believe in Him as a good and merciful Being. We may further depend on the effect of repentance and amendment of life, in obtaining forgiveness of sins *for Christ’s sake*, by observing the direction of St. Paul for the guidance of his convert churches with respect to offenders ; remembering, that as baptism was the form by which they were admitted as members of those Christian communities, these directions must have been given with respect to sins, after baptism. He tells the elder of the church to “ restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted*.” Thus proving it not only possible but probable, that those which are spiritual may be “ overtaken in a fault ;” and to another Church which he had found it necessary to rebuke sharply for their want of order and decency in religious worship, their divisions, their wicked lives, and especially for their unworthy partaking of the Lord’s Supper†, he writes

* Gal. vi. 1.

† 1 Cor. v. and xi.

that, “after having punished such offenders” they were, upon the repentance of such a one, “to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow;” wherefore, “he says, “I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love towards him*.” Wherefore it is evident that the Apostle Paul did not “*deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.*” On the other hand, “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;†” and we are even encouraged to pray for one another, for this beloved disciple assures us, “if any man see his brother sin, a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death;‡” and in this we have incomparable comfort; for we may be so situated that prayer will be the only assistance we can give to an erring brother; and at all events we have reason to believe it may be the most likely to prove beneficial. It is a never-failing source to apply to, and the duty moreover of every Christian. “Pray one for another§,” “saith the Apostle James, and we imitate our Holy Lord the most when we are thus engaged in supplication to God in behalf of a fallen brother. My dear _____, I trust the important subject of this article is made clear to you. I pray God that I may not have misled you in any way, nor have “wrested scripture” to afford a meaning which it was not intended to convey. After understanding the import of the “sin against the Holy Ghost,” as I have endeavoured to show it, I think you will find no difficulty in perceiving the impossibility of renewing such apos-

* 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

‡ 1 John v. 16.

† 1 John i. 8, 9.

§ Jas. v. 16.

tates to repentance*, or in believing that "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them†," "whose end is to be burned;" "for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin‡." It is my earnest desire to lead you from the *study* of doctrines to the *important practice* of them, for "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth§;" and it were better for you not to know, than in the day of retribution to be found wanting in humble obedience. How earnestly then do I entreat you to pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that in word and in deed you may "glorify God in your body and in your Spirit which are God's;" to whom be all the praise that you are His servant and admitted to the privilege of joining in the assembly of His saints.

Ever believe me, your sincere friend.

Refer to Lev. iv. 1—8; Deut. xi.; 1 Kings viii. 31, 32; Isa. i.

LETTER XVIII.

MY DEAR —————,

We have now arrived at another of those points of doctrine which has occasioned the greatest divisions and disputes among the several members of the Christian Church—the doctrine of Predestination. I will first transcribe the article and then proceed to give you my views upon it gathered from Scripture alone, and a desire to conceive such notions only of the Diety as will con-

* Heb. vi. 4—8.

† Heb. x. 26.

‡ 2 Peter ii. 21.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

duce most evidently to His glory. I consider this the duty of His servants in all things which are above their intellectual powers, and in which His word is not perfectly explicit, but seems to point to a variety of meanings.

ARTICLE XVII.

“Of Predestination and Election.”

Art. XVII.—“Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, (before the foundations of the world were laid,) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour, wherefore they which be induced with so excellent a benefit of God, be called, according to God’s purpose, by His Spirit working in due season they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only-begotten son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works and at length by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

“As the godly consideration of Predestination and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well, because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; so for curious and carnal persons lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s predestination, is a most danger-

ous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

“ Furthermore we must receive God’s promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy scripture; and in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.”

You will perceive in this article that our Church has not absolutely declared herself in favour of either side of this question. She permits her children to judge for themselves; whether they are inclined to believe that God has created the world solely for His own glory without respect to its creatures, and thus formed the greater part of mankind on purpose for unavoidable and eternal misery, or that they are themselves accountable for their good or evil actions, whereby they may lose or attain everlasting happiness. That He who knows all things, also knows, and ever did know from the foundation of the world, who would accept His grace and be eventually saved, it is contrary to reason to disbelieve. Witness the prophecies and their exact fulfilment, although in the fulfilling of them, there was sin permitted. He did not cause men to sin, but He having given man freewill, cannot, that is, it would be contrary to His truth, to prevent their doing so, if they will. Undoubtedly He “ who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling,” did it, “ not according to our works,” that is, not for our deserving, for I have already proved to you that we *cannot* deserve any thing of God, but He has done so “ according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*;” but this does not infer that because He has chosen of

“ His own free mercy to call us to salvation, that others are excluded. “ To all*” is the offer made : none who will believe need be lost ; it depends entirely on their own freewill ; whether, “ God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth†.*” This predestination of God consists in His having fore-ordained or predetermined, what He will do with those who shall accept His offers of salvation through Christ, and also with those who shall reject them, but although this election must be “ through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ‡,” it does not preclude the necessity of our utmost circumspection in life and doctrine, for “ He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will§.” Christ speaks of “ the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world||,” but nowhere separates the promise of it from obedience and good works. And St. Paul tells us, that “ whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified**.” This follows of course in the divine covenant of grace, that to those who are willing to accept His Spirit *freely offered to all*, and who accordingly pray for

* See Rom. viii. 32; 2 Pet. ; iii. 9; Heb. x. 10; Acts ii. 39.

† 2.The-s. ii. 13. || Matt. xxv. 34.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 2. ** Rom. viii. 29, 30.

§ Eph. i. 4, 5.

more grace and strive as much as in them lies to obey His will, that He will to each accord more and more, and so by necessary degrees they will be first, “ called and then justified,” and then follows that after death they will be “ glorified.” We have plainly seen and it is so fully proved how His grace “ is free,” and undeserved on our part, that I need not repeat it here, nor further enlarge upon it. “ If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not* :” “ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life† :” “ Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth‡ :” “ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worked all things after the counsel of his own will§,” nor are we to expound any part of scripture in a sense directly opposite to another. Our blessed Saviour offered and earnestly entreated all men to come unto Him, and forcibly denounced punishment on those who refused, yet He said, “ that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father|| :” is not this plain ? The power must be “ given,” and it is given to all who will take it. It would seem the Apostle Paul was led to wonder at the presumption of sinful man, and in astonishment at God’s permitting so much evil to prevail was induced to burst forth into the humble exclamation, “ Nay but Oh man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed

* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

§ Eph. i. 11.

† John iii. 16.

|| John vi. 65.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ? What if God, willing to shew His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ; and that he might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory*." Yet observe he only speaks of the right God had to do so, not that He has made any on purpose for destruction, or without the possibility of being saved, if they will be, for God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked†. His hatred of Esau from the womb and love of Jacob‡, was it not caused by his *fore-knowledge* of their several characters ? And the " names " of the lost " which were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world§," and " they which are written in the Lamb's book of life,||" what is this but the pre-determination of God respecting the rewards and punishments of them who through their own freewill, should receive or reject salvation ? Let us then say, " blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**." Let us not deceive ourselves by imagining that the eternal God whose attribute is justice, as well as love, would ordain endless bliss or endless woe to fallen man without his

* Rom. ix. 20-23.

§ Rev. xvii. 8.

† Ezek. xviii. 23.

|| Rev. xxi. 27 ; also Phil. iv. 3.

‡ Rom. ix. 11.

** 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5.

own freewill to choose between them : it is contrary to His express word, and we must not explain one part of holy writ to the detriment of another. God cannot lie, therefore we may depend on His word that He will act the part He has promised, and to all who " seek Him," He will reveal Himself, and give everlasting life through Christ. I trust, my dear ———, this subject is made clear to you and that you will never be led by the disputation of others to consider yourself predestined to be this or that : such a consideration does away with freewill, the necessity of which for the vindication of God's justice, I have before endeavoured to prove to you. I am aware that those who hold with a different meaning to the doctrine of predestination and election, endeavour to satisfy and quiet their consciences with respect to God's justice, by saying that it is impossible for finite reason to comprehend His ways. True, we are not capable of understanding Him as He is ; but what notions we do form, though imperfect, must not be contradictory or unworthy. This idea leads me to think as I do on the subject before us. I hope I do not derogate from the majesty of God in thus using the reason He has endowed me with in judging of Him. The decision I have arrived at as regards this point has been the result of prayer, and study of the Scriptures, it was formed without the assistance of books, although it has been since confirmed by the arguments I have read and heard on both sides. I firmly believe it to be correct, and for the glory of God thus to construe it. To that God I recommend you, my dear ———. I do not require you to give your assent to this, or any other point of which your reason is not fully convinced, but I do earnestly entreat you to make up your mind from the study of holy writ. " Search the scriptures," said our

blessed Lord; what more can His servants recommend, or what with greater confidence? Pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit which He hath promised to all who ask for it*, "He will guide you into all truth†." Rely steadfastly on the words of our dear Redeemer, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God‡," but remember that to receive the fulfilment of this promise you must desire, and endeavour, to do His will. Let nothing on your part be wanting, and be confident that God on His part will perform His promise. May you be thus, "filled with all joy and peace in believing."

I am ever,

Your sincere friend,

Refer to Gen. xii. 1, 3; Exod. iii. xix. 5; Deut. iv. ix. xxix. 29; Psal. cx. 3; Isa. xl. xliv. xlix. lv. 7; Jer. iv. Mic. vi. 8.

LETTER XIX.

MY DEAR _____,

I THINK you will find but little difficulty in acceding to the next article proposed for your examination; we will therefore proceed immediately to it.

ARTICLE XVIII.

"*Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the name of Christ.*"

Art. XVIII.—"They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or

* Luke xi. 13. † John xvi. 13. ‡ John vii. 17.

sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

The only difficulty lies concerning those to whom Christ has not been revealed: for I should imagine, there cannot remain a doubt after all that has been advanced, that to those unto whom He has been made known, there can be no hope held out of eternal life if they reject Him. Holy Scripture confirms this. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me*." "Neither is there salvation in any other" said Peter, "for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.†" St. John bears witness to the same, when he saith, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" and indeed the whole of Scripture is but one argument on this point. Its reasonableness I hope you see, and need not that it should here be more enlarged on. It is the great point which I have all along endeavoured to arrive at in our consideration of the article on original sin. Freewill, justification, good-works, and predestination each of these subjects has necessarily borne closely upon the main point of Christianity, and I trust you have not studied so far without perceiving it; but it still remains to notice the state of the rest of mankind who have not the benefits of the light of the Gospel. Millions of our fellow-creatures live and die without so much as hearing that there is a Saviour or a Holy Ghost. Of such God cannot require what He does of those to whom this blessed revelation has been made, and yet these may be,

* John xiv. 6.

† Acts iv. 12.

and *are* saved through Christ, as many of them as live according to the light vouchsafed them. It does not follow that they must have a knowledge of the way by which they are saved, St. Paul speaking of the Gentiles, the heathens, says, “There is no respect of persons with God ; for as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves ; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another* ;” and this gives us every reason to believe that those nations unto whom God has not seen fit to reveal His law will be saved according to their works, and yet through Christ—for His sake—and in consideration of His merits. It is those who reject Him who will be “cast out,” and only those ; and although this manner of viewing the subject gives all possible comfort to the benevolent heart, yet it opens no hope for those who have the offers of the Gospel, and who shall neglect or despise them, on the contrary it should lead them, being thus blessed with light, to a more earnest seeking after the truth as it is, in that Jesus through whom alone even the heathens can be accepted. He also is thus magnified by being mysteriously “the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*.” We must not hide our face from the truth, and the whole truth. “Christ died” also for all those who cannot believe in Him, *because they have not heard of Him and yet have done their duty to the best of their power* ; His death is rendered bene-

ficial to such through God's mercy which looks on Christ's sufferings as their atonement; but those who hearing of Him *refuse to believe* are doomed to perish everlastingily. This denunciation, however awful and painful to reflect upon, is unquestionably declared in Scripture, and we are "accursed" if we say that there is salvation in any other name but that of Christ. It is nevertheless the duty of a Christian community, although they may thus hope for the acceptance of the heathen, to labour diligently to send forth ministers and teachers of the gospel to such; for although St. Paul considered them *in this light safe*, yet he did not relax in his strenuous exertions to instruct them. It is not sufficient to believe them just within the possibility of salvation, neither is it a time to be idle; it proves but a very lukewarm spirit of Christian charity to be thus satisfied: in whatever way we can advance the glory of God it is our duty and our highest privilege to do so.

With this article we end that portion which treats more particularly of our individual duties. The rest concern us as members of the visible Church on earth and ought accordingly to be duly considered. Adieu, my dear ———, for the present, and believe me ever,
Your faithful and attached friend,

———.

Refer to Deut. xviii. 15—19; Isa. xliii. 11; xlv. 21.

———

LETTER XX.

MY DEAR ———,

WE now come to consider those articles which relate to the Church of Christ, as a community or body of

men, and to determine in what a Church consists, with also its authority.

ARTICLE XIX.

“Of the Church.”

Art. XIX.—“*The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.”*

That this was the idea of the Apostles and first Christians respecting what formed a Church is evident if we observe the manner in which they speak of it. For instance, St. Paul addresses himself “unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*.” He also says, Jesus “is the head of the body, the Church†.” He speaks of “the Church” when he means to designate a party of faithful believers‡. It seems therefore very easy and clear to see what the term “Church” signifies, and we know that if it is a community of faithful Christians, they will be particularly careful that the pure word of God be preached in it and that the sacraments ordained of Christ shall be duly administered. This is self-evident, and I think it is

* 1 Cor. i. 2.

† Col. i. 18; see also Eph. v. 23.

‡ Rom. xvi. 5; also Col. iv. 15; Phil. iv. 15; 2 Thes. i. 1; and many other passages.

also as plain and easy to believe, that in such a community, formed of man, evil and weak by nature, there is not only a possibility, but a very great probability, and even certainty, that a church may err. Doubtless God can and does always preserve to Himself a pure church ; but it has been His will at times to allow those “ *witnesses*” to be few, and small in power. He has permitted His true Church to be persecuted, in order to purify and cleanse it from the unavoidable corruption, which it must contract by being, to a certain degree, at least, in the hands of frail and sinful men. As God acts towards individuals, in the same manner He acts towards His Church ; as He afflicts and tries them for their future good, by private sorrows and afflictions, so does He see fit at times and seasons to afflict and try His Church, by public grievances, difficulties and wrongs ; and this consideration alone, would be a powerful assurance of the fallibility of any body of men, whether we call it a church, or a council. That the Church of Rome has indeed greatly erred, in practice and doctrine, any one, who knows the least of its History, and its tenets, will easily admit. At the time of the Reformation, the few “ *witnesses*” who saw its errors, were enabled through God’s assistance, to establish a purified Church in these realms. Then was the great purifying of the body of Christianity ; then was it cleansed from the filthiness of superstition and error, and once more fixed on a firm basis under the title of the Protestant faith, and in this is a strong answer to all who ask us, “ Where was our Church before the Reformation ? ” It is a mistaken notion that our’s is a newly sprung-up faith ; it is not so, but is descended from the Apostles, in common with the Church of Rome ; in fact, it is incorporated in that body. We are all Catholics, but we have *protested against the*

errors of that community, and thence call ourselves Protestants. Our's is a purified Church, having "come out of great tribulation;" that it is not infallible we must allow; it may again fall into error, and again be purified and tried. God knows best what is good for His Church. He knows best how to preserve it until His coming; let us, therefore, trust to Him, and never concede to any thing which the Bible points out as contrary to His will, either in our Church, or our practice. Yet, although it is not infallible, we have great cause for thankfulness, when we consider how much has been done through the grace of God to free it from error. It does, not shut up the word of God from its members, as does the Church of Rome. On the contrary, it sanctions, nay invites and requires, its examination, before one of its baptized children becomes a member of it, by confirmation; it desires no blind leading, but lays its tenets and the Bible on which they are built, open for the conviction of each of its professors. This is a good sign. We always consider openness a true mark of sincerity in all worldly dealings: shall we not likewise judge it to be so in spiritual matters? Let me then entreat you to obey the injunctions of this holy Church, of which we may justly hope and believe, "Christ is the head;" take nothing on hearsay; search for yourself. Remember the Romans were said to be "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so;" and it is added, "therefore many of them believed*," for this is an appointed means of salvation; and we must expect a blessing only

* Acts xvii. 11, 12.

in the use of such as Christ has appointed. May He guide your spirit into a right belief of all these things.

I am ever,

Your faithful friend,

LETTER XXI.

We are still, my dear ——, upon the subject of the Church as a body, but considered more as to its pastors in this than in the former article. That a body of men, in order to remain a united community must have certain heads or masters to keep it together, as well as to superintend certain forms, without which it must fall into endless and continual divisions, is very clear to every thinking mind, but it becomes necessary to determine how far their authority shall extend and what shall be placed under their power: this is the subject of the following article.

ARTICLE XX.

“ Of the authority of the Church.”

Art. XX.—“ The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in controversies of Faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation.”

By this article our Church is effectually guarded against all abuse arising from individual interests in its

pastors or ministers, for every one of its members has his Bible and need conform to nothing which is not therein stated, or can by that word be proved to be in opposition to it in any way. This constitutes a strong security; and for rites or ceremonies, seeing thus that they dare not be made against the word of God written, we allow that it is wisest and best for the safety of our Church that its heads should regulate and fix certain forms in order to the keeping it together; we find the Apostles did so, and suited their ceremonies and outward forms to the different habits of the countries in which they made converts and formed Churches; to the intent that "all things" should "be done decently and in order*." "For this cause" writes St. Paul to Titus, "left thee I in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee†. We find also that he said to Timothy, "charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith‡." We have the example of all the Apostles in the dispute about the Mosaic laws, that they and the "elders came together for to consider of this matter§;" and although they thus considered their decision to be correct, and required the acquiescence of the several members of the Church in it, yet they affirm "though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed||."'

It is a salutary requisition of our Church, that its head or pastors should have a greater authority than

* 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

§ Acts xv. 6.

† Tit. i. 5.

|| Gal. i. 8.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 3, 4.

its other members even in controversies of faith. They are a body of men to whom is consigned the keeping of God's word; they do (or ought to) make it their constant study; and consequently ought to be better judges in such matters than the rest of the Church, or the laity; it is therefore most correct that they, as a body, should not only be listened to with attention, but to a great degree, depended on. It is a means just and reasonable; and if more closely kept up by their good example and strict conformity to the word, in their characters as ministers, would be productive of the utmost benefit to the Church, and effectually keep us all more united as a body. The Church of Christ includes all His believers, although unhappily divided on earth by little unworthy differences in forms and habits. The true badge of the Church is Christianity, and all are included in it, who agree in the fundamental doctrines as set forth in the Bible. It is devoutly and earnestly to be wished that there did not exist the divisions which there are among us; but partly we must attribute them to the lamentable luke-warmness of our established clergy in many instances, and partly to the different dispositions and frailties of mankind in general. It is perhaps an irremediable evil, but an evil it certainly is, in that it sows the seeds of discord among the inhabitants of the earth, who as each equally concerned in the salvation of their souls, and equally included under the curse of sin, should be as brethren, seeing they have but one common interest, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" such "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*," is what we must not expect to be perfected here; it will be so in heaven, when there will be perfect knowledge and "perfect love." Unto this happy state

* Eph. iv. 3, 5.

we should earnestly pray God to bring us, through the power of the Holy Spirit for the merits of His Son. My dear ———, that we may meet in that blessed kingdom is the fervent wish of,

Your faithful friend,

———.

Refer to Deut. xii. 32; Esth. ix. 27, 28.

LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR ———,

HAVING considered the nature of a Church and its authority, it next becomes us to determine how far the power of general councils extends. The abuse of this power was one great cause of Protestant Reformation. The see of Rome having pretended to an infallibility in its decrees by council, and not scrupling to make new laws, and new doctrines, in which it required implicit belief in order to salvation; whereas we will not allow any thing but what can be proved from Scripture, to be necessary. I will however transcribe the article at once and endeavour to point out its reasonableness.

ARTICLE XXI.

“Of the Authority of General Councils.”

Art. XXI.—“General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes, and when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) they may err and sometimes have erred even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.”

Now the reasonableness of this decree that these councils shall not be called without the commandment and will of Princes is very evident if we for a moment consider the great evil that would undoubtedly arise if it were not so: the evil in nations and to nations as perhaps causing dissensions and variances, wars and tumults. If a country is governed by a supreme power in the person of a King or Emperor, it is most requisite for the peace of that nation or empire, that there be nothing of consequence transacted, or even entered into without the knowledge and sanction of that person. We find our duty under such circumstances pointed out in scripture: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers*;" and "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King as supreme; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and the praise of them that do well; for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king†." Here we find our duty clearly pointed out to us as regards the will of Princes.

The second part of the article scarcely needs a comment, for I think the natural sinfulness of man has been so fully proved in former parts of these articles that you will not for an instant dissent from the probability of councils, composed of frail men, being liable to err. That they have done so to a dreadful excess it is only necessary to know that they have even on the same subjects made the most contrary decisions; and their

* Rom. xiii. 1.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13—17.

has need to fear death, for Christ has suffered and atoned for all his sins ; and there remains only the fruition of glory to be inherited by the ransomed. Besides this the doctrine of Purgatory bears on its face the strongest marks of absurdity and contradiction, for do we not constantly affirm that it is not, it cannot be, in the power of any frail being to deserve grace or reward ? if we could expiate our offences by suffering or by any other way, it is evident reward would be our due, and we might claim it as our right. We have no right to any thing ; it is God's free gift, and though there are necessary conditions for our obtaining eternal life in order to demonstrate His justice, yet after all it is for the sake of another, and that other Christ, and not for ourselves that we are saved at all. I trust these considerations with what has been advanced on other occasions, will be a full refutation to your mind of the pernicious doctrine of Purgatory, and now we come to the next subject mentioned in our Article, that of pardons granted by the Pope or the clergy to themselves or others. " Who can forgive sins but God only* ?" and indeed the whole tenor of Scripture bears us out, in denying the power of forgiving sins, to any but God. Peter speaks of God's exalting Christ to give to Israel forgiveness of sins†. Paul preaches the same through Christ‡, and informs the Ephesians and Colossians of it also, when writing to them§. It is the constant theme of the Apostles, and if a power granted to man in general, how is it made of such importance and spoken of as such a mercy in the Gospel ? The mischief this false doctrine has done in the Romish Church is incalculable. Many are the poor deluded souls who greedily drink in the pardon or absolution of

* Mark ii. 7.

† Acts xvii. 31 ; xxvi. 18.

‡ Acts x. 36—43.

§ Eph. i. 14 ; Col. i. 14.

their Priest and so think to have escaped from God's anger for the most atrocious crimes. If a man could pay well, he could be pardoned, and thus might Peter justly say to that corrupted Church, "But there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them*." The exceeding sinfulness of such proceedings is perfectly apparent, although this practice may not have originated in sin. The expediency of acknowledging our sins to each other for the purpose of gaining the prayers and advice of Christian friends or pastors, must be evident to every reflecting mind, in that it also sets a bar upon our wicked actions from the fear of shame, and naturally makes us more circumspect. Any thing which we find a means of assistance in the difficult path of righteousness is not only expedient but becomes a duty, and if this practice is found effectual, it is our duty to perform it, according to the direction of St. James. "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another†;" for we are naturally more careful to avoid doing what may be detected and blamed by our fellow men. I grant this is an unworthy motive to be actuated by, when the fear of God alone ought to be the sufficient and even the most powerful incentive, but such is our natural weakness—and every candid person is compelled to admit it. The doctrine of pardons has most probably been an abuse which has crept in, and originated from confession. The ministers appointed to receive the confessions of the people have taken on themselves to grant them pardon or absolution, and by exacting payment for such benefits have continued to deceive the people and enrich themselves, and by degrees this has become a con-

* 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 18. † Jas. v. 16.

siderable part of the revenue of their Church ; added to which is the money they obtain for indulgences or supererogatory works of those whom they denominate Saints. Thus one sin leads to another, and I ask you, my dear _____, can you hesitate for a moment in bearing witness to the unworthiness of a Church which not only corrupts the pure Word of God, but also adds, upon its own authority, and for worldly motives, doctrines, in direct opposition to holy Writ. Alas ! it is a melancholy fact, that so many poor souls are thus deceived, and we can only pray to God that He will vouchsafe to enlighten them by allowing them the power of reading His precious Gospcl which at present is kept from them. When that happy consummation is achieved we may hope to see the errors of the Popish Church recanted, and not till then. But we must now turn to another of their gross idolatries. I mean the worshipping and adoration of images and reliques with also the invocation of saints. These two points may I think be considered together, as they bear an almost inseparable union ; and first, let us notice what God Himself has declared regarding them, by the mouth of His servants, and especially by His Son. "Jesus saith unto" the devil in His temptation on the Mount, when he desired the Lord and Creator of all both in Heaven and in earth, (consequently his Creator and Lord, to fall down and worship him, promising to give Him all the kingdoms of the world (already His) if He would do so, "Get thee hence, Satan ; for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve*." St. Paul earnestly entreats the Colossians, saying, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not

* Matt. iv. 10.

seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*." It may be inferred that the kind of errors he warns them from in this advice were similar to those of Purgatory, Pardons, and Worship of Saints, which we are now guarded against. Thus far the similitude is perfect: the errors of the Church of Rome and those of which the Church of Colosse were warned consisted of trusting in legal observances or such as are not authorized by Scripture. In St. Peter's reply to the reverence paid him by Cornelius, who "fell down at his feet and worshipped him," we learn that such undue veneration was not received even by the inspired Apostles; for St. Peter said, "Stand up, I myself also am a man†." *They* refused such homage who had been the chosen companions of the blessed Saviour, and were entrusted by *Him* with power to work miracles for the furtherance of *His* Gospel; and shall weak uninspired men pretend to such reverence? still less the images of such? things of wood and stone, alike incapable of hearing or answering? or the bones or garments of the departed? though ever so true servants of God, can they aid us? I know it is objected by many members of the Romish Church, "We do not adore the images or reliques; we merely use them as a means of bringing to mind the object of our adoration, God, or the virtues and inestimable qualities of the saints." But can forbidden acts be acceptable means, or can persons using such, expect or hope for them to be blessed to any good end? The reverse of this we acknowledge not only as an evident consequence, but we daily observe it, for the ignorant are imposed upon and deceived by

* Col. ii. 18, 19.

† Acts v. 25, 26.

such objects, and hence arises the belief in the power of the Virgin over her Son, and the benefits supposed to be derived from invoking the saints; notions every way repugnant to the Word of God and even to common sense. We read "there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*", and that "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him†." What more can be done for us, or we desire? The worshipping of angels is again forcibly forbidden in the Revelation of St. John with whom the Angel conversed when describing the wonders of his vision. He tells us, "I fell at his feet to worship him and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy‡." Here we find that this blessed Angel and Saint in Heaven renounced the worship of mortal man, and though we are commanded to pray for each other on earth as heirs of the same promise, and interested in one common hope, yet we have no authority from Scripture for a belief that the prayers of the departed will be heard for their brethren yet militant in this probationary world: indeed such intercession is unnecessary, because we have Christ as our Mediator who knows what is best for us and with whom prayer is always effectual. It is our part to make our wants known unto Him and to ask His influence with the Father who only has a right to obtain all He asks, in that He has paid the price, even with His own blood, and thus merited our salvation. The very doctrines of Popery themselves carry with them a contradiction, for they teach first that we are to pray for the departed to obtain their release from Purgatory, and then we are to pray to them

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† Heb. vii. 25.

‡ Rev. xix. 10.

to gain their influence with God to give us what we may wish. All this is entirely done away in the mediation of our Lord, who “ever liveth to make intercession.” Let us therefore believe and own nothing which can derogate from His blessed majesty and power, but earnestly endeavour to “keep” ourselves “from idols*.” There is not much fear that you, my dear ——, who have been educated in the Church of England, and are allowed and enjoined to study your Bible for yourself in all points of doctrine, should fall into these pernicious errors, but it is possible you may hear the subjects argued, and it is best you should have a scriptural knowledge of their fallacy and sin, lest you may be induced to doubt the propriety of our Church in so steadfastly rejecting fellowship with such a body. You will also be more firmly grafted in the true and Apostolic Church, and you will be less likely to consider that Protestants act uncharitably towards Roman Catholics as many do who have not seriously examined the Romish tenets with Scripture, whose danger both as regards a spiritual and temporal interest must then clearly appear. When we consider that they scruple not to “do evil that good may come,” of whom St. Paul says, their “damnation is just†,” have we not cause to fear their proceedings? They consider that to bring converts to their Church is the “good” which will authorize every species of wickedness or deceit; and may we not therefore justly suspect their dealings? We are acquainted with the persecutions and mischief they have in former times brought upon that Church whose leading feature being “peace and good-will” has been the more easy prey for them to harass and perplex; it is our duty consequently, as much as possible to keep ourselves secure from such enemies, but at the

* 1 John v. 21.

† Rom. iii. 8.

same time we must not forget that our God in whom we trust, and unto whom we are commanded to "come boldly" "and find grace to help in time of need*," can and will preserve His true Church to the end, and will sanctify every affliction to its purification and advantage: if therefore we should again be tried by persecution or trouble of any kind, we must look to Him with confidence and know assuredly that as nothing can happen but what He pleases to permit, so if such take place it will be undoubtedly that He may more and more "purify unto Himself a peculiar people†;" and it behoves us each to examine himself whether he may not be, by his sins and negligences, adding to that weight of transgression which may be crying for vengeance and bringing on this fiery ordeal. We are not ignorant of God's dealings with the Jews, who were before "his people;" how he punished their Church and nation for their sins, and how He was pleased to remove His correcting hand when they turned to Him, and repented. In such times especially as the present it well behoves us to "turn and repent," and to see whether God will turn from us the evils which we have deserved, and which on all sides appear to threaten us. He is merciful, but our sins are great; and if He is to preserve a pure Church, He must use means to purge it from all its filthiness: luke-warmness and negligence are as fearful as enthusiasm and fanaticism, all leading to unworthy and unreasonable ideas of God. Many things there are in our beautiful and holy religion which rise above our finite understanding, but nothing contrary to the reason which God has bestowed on us, which ought not to be silenced and slighted, but to be used both as regards Him and His revealed will. Let it therefore be our guide in accordance with

* Heb. iv. 16.

† Tit. ii. 14.

the assisting power of the Holy Spirit, which all who pray for and do His will to the utmost, may positively have vouchsafed them, and let us neither fall into superstitious warmth nor negligent coldness and indifference. May God enable you, my dear ———, to “take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand*.” “Peace” then will be with you, “and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ†.”

And believe me ever affectionately,
And anxiously your friend,

Refer to Exod. xx. 4, 5 ; Lev. xxvi. 1 ; Deut. iv. 12, 15, 16, xvi. 22 ; xvii. 15 ; Psalms xlix. 7 ; lxv. 2 ; Isa. xl. 17-27 ; xliv. 9—21 ; Jer. x. 1—16 ; Dan. ix. 9, Hab. ii. 18, 19, 20.

LETTER XXIV.

MY DEAR ———,

IN order to the due regulation and preservation of our Church, we next find an article deciding the manner of electing or choosing those who shall have the office of ministering in it. It becomes necessary that this point should be determined in order to preserve that unity and regularity without which no body of men would long continue. Certain rules and laws are requisite for the forming any community, and after those are determined it is as necessary to have a fixed mode of electing heads or masters to enforce them, as well as for the teaching and instructing the ignorant, for which purpose it is a part of

* Eph. vi. 13.

† Eph. vi. 23.

the duty of the Church to provide fit and proper persons. The question is, whom are we to consider properly elected, which is the subject of the following article.

ARTICLE XXIII.

“Of Ministering in the Congregation.”

Art. XXIII.—“It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.”

The provision made in this article for the lawful appointment of ministers, by those publicly authorized to do so, is an inexpressible advantage to our Church. It is thereby intended, for them to be men of learning and high character, fit and proper to have the care of immortal souls, and well instructed in the way of life; which it is their duty to teach and enforce among their congregations. And it has ever been the custom even from the times of the Apostles, for the heads of the Church to ordain others to this office; as we read in St. Paul’s Epistle to his “son Titus.” “For this cause,” says he, “left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee*.” Our blessed Lord said, “As my father hath sent me, even so send I you†.” It was also the practice of the earliest disciples, who “ordained them in every Church‡;” and St.

* Tit. i. 5.

† John xx. 21.

‡ Acts xiv. 23.

Paul earnestly entreats Timothy, “neglect not the gift which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*.” He also desires him, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also†;” for he says of the authority of such duly elected ministers, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us‡.” Surely the forgoing texts from Scriptures are a sufficient argument against any man’s presuming to undertake so responsible a part in the Lord’s vineyard in an irregular way; that is, without being called to it by God. “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron§.” In the Old dispensation the order of priesthood was limited to a peculiar family of a particular tribe, and the strictest laws were enforced as to age, capability, &c. &c.; and are we to allow every idle or enthusiastic fanatic to minister in our pure and holy Church? God forbid! We desire that ours should, “in all things,” approve themselves, “as the ministers of God**,” “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine††,” showing themselves to be workmen “that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth†††.” And as St. Paul further instructs Timothy, “the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will§§.” And when we are blessed

* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

** 2 Cor. vi. 4.

† 2 Tim. ii. 2.

†† 2 Tim. iv. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 20.

‡‡ 2 Tim. ii. 15.

§ Heb. v. 4.

§§ 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26.

with having such pastors in our church, it is our duty to reverence them and to learn of them; to listen patiently and thankfully to their advice and admonition, and to be grateful to God who thus speaks by them. Unhappily, (as it must unavoidably occur in every community composed of sinful mortals,) there exist in this body, (which ought to be so pure and for which so many precautions are taken,) some, who are not wholly worthy of their high calling. Let us then, my dear ———, unite our prayer with that of all Christians, that God may see fit to purge such from amongst his people, and more and more to sanctify those who are now faithfully engaged in the work of the ministry “ that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified*.”

Believe me, Your faithful friend,

—————.

Refer to Exod. xxviii. 1; Exod. xxix.; Lev. viii.; Num. iii.; Num. xviii.; 1 Kings xii. 31; Jer. xxiii. 21.

—————

LETTER XXV.

AGAIN, my dear ———, we touch upon a subject which has close connection with the discipline and well-being of our church. It is the rule in the Romish church, to pray in the Latin tongue; which to most of the congregation is not intelligible; this custom we deprecate as being useless and replete with mischief, having the tendency to turn the worship of God into a vain pageant and empty show; we have therefore provided against such proceedings in

* 2 Thess. iii. 1.

ARTICLE XXIV.

“ Of speaking in the congregation in such a tongue as the people understandeth.”

Art. XXIV.—“ It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God and the custom of the Primitive Church to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacra-ments in a tongue not understood of the people.”

Let us first consult scripture on this point. Our Blessed Saviour said, “ God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him must worship HIm in spirit and in truth*.” Now this indicates that it can be of no consequence to God in what language He is addressed, provided it be “ in spirit and in truth :” and it is contrary to all common sense to suppose a person can thus worship Him when he does so in a form of speech wholly unintelligible to himself, and which most probably appears to him without sense and a ridiculous jargon, as we well know every foreign tongue does to those unacquainted with it. Besides, for what benefit was the gift of tongues if it was not to enable the Apostles and first teachers of the gospel to instruct each nation in its own peculiar dialect, that so all might be done to edifying ? Let us notice what St. Paul says regarding this part of the ministry : “ I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied : for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.” “ So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood how shall it be known what is spoken; for ye shall speak into the air.” “ If I know not the meaning of the voice I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that

* John iv. 24.

speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." "If I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful: what is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the place of the unlearned say amen at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified; I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" "Let all things be done unto edifying*." These directions are especially copious for the regulation of ministering in the congregation in a tongue understood by the hearers; the reverse produces confusion and misconception, and we find it never to have been the habit of the primitive church, neither of the Jewish, for it adapted its language to the usage of the people; when the Jews were in captivity, though the Hebrew was not entirely lost, yet as they used the Chaldee more commonly, so they had a paraphrase made into it; when the Syriac became more familiar, they used their prayers in that tongue; and when Greek became most used, they also read their law and prayed in Greek: and we may from the consideration of all these circumstances infer, that should any particular form of language become obsolete, even in our litany and form of prayer, so

* 1 Cor. xiv. 5, 9, 11, 14.—19, 26.

as to render it difficult to be understood by the people, it would be lawful to alter such; provided the holy scriptures are made the foundation as they now are of the whole. How far it might be expedient to change any part of our excellent and almost perfect liturgy, it remains with the appointed heads of our church to consider; but should they at any time decm it so, we must hope and pray they will make the word of God their guide, and do it in the power and spirit of humble dependance on the divine aid; and then it will become us to submit to such alteration in the trust of an advantage to the community, and the glory of our Master Jesus Christ—"In whom and to whom are all things." That God may so guide and govern His church, let it be our constant prayer, that in the end we may be a nation fearing and loving Him and looking forward to His coming with joy, when there will be one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ the righteous, and all will hear and understand His voice. That we may meet in that blessed kingdom where there will be no distinction of pupil or teacher, but each will be but a part of *one glorious whole* is, my dear ———, the affectionate prayer of,

Your very sincere friend,

———.

LETTER XXVI.

MY DEAR ———,

WE now come to consider the nature of those sacraments or badges of distinction, which point out, and hold together, a church, and which may therefore be very justly called Bonds of union, and tokens of our profession. The following Article describes to us what these are, and

how many we acknowledge, in opposition to those professed by the Romish church, and which we have discarded, as not having the nature of sacraments. I propose to consider the different parts of this Article separately, and must entreat your earnest attention, as on it depends much of the Apostolic purity, of our Protestant faith.

ARTICLE XXV.

“Of the Sacraments.”

Art. XXV.—“Sacraments ordained of Christ, be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession ; but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God’s good-will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

“Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel ; being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles ; partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures ; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

“The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation ; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.”

In this Article we have first explained the nature of a Sacrament or what constitutes one in the mind of the

church, with its uses. It shows us that a Sacrament is something more than a bare ritual form. It is not only a badge or token of our profession as Christians, but implies an action on our part by which as a means we receive a blessing from God. It was most necessary (although our Blessed Redeemer came to do away the many ordinances, rites, and ceremonies of the Jewish Law), that He should leave us some outward rites by which to keep us in communion one with another, and also that we might have an appointed means, visible to our outward senses, through which the blessings of the Gospel might be conveyed to us. Sacraments therefore are not only badges and tokens of our Christian fellowship, but they are effectual signs of grace; and if we do our part in them, with sincerity and truth, we may absolutely expect God's good will towards us, and that He will by them invisibly work in us, quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith in Him, as our Article plainly says. Now in order to have the nature of a Sacrament it is necessary for it to consist of the five following parts, namely, matter, or material substance, which is what we can positively with our outward senses feel and see; a form, or words fitly joined with it and appropriate to it; a divine institution; an act on our part; and a blessing expected to be received through or by it. A common rite or ceremony cannot lay claim to all these peculiar parts; and nothing but can be proved to consist of them do we term a sacrament in the sense of the church. Having thus determined, in what a sacrament consists, we must next examine those which we receive as such and see if they will bear this meaning laid upon them. We acknowledge two in our church, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ordained

by Christ as generally necessary to salvation; let us notice whether both these bear the nature of such.

First, Baptism. In these is water, which is matter; the person is dipped or sprinkled; with the words, "I baptize thee," "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here we have the form. Our Saviour commanded, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations*." This is the divine institution; the person baptized is required to believe and repent, entering into a covenant of allegiance unto God; this is the act upon our part; and to be taken into that covenant by Him, to receive forgiveness of sins, to be made heirs of salvation through Christ, and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; or the expected blessings of God. Thus you see baptism contains all the parts necessary for a sacrament; but I wish to prove positively and more strongly from Scripture that this is so; we will therefore delay our inquiry into the other sacrament until we have done entirely with this. First as to the use of water; we find it was used by John who was especially sent to baptize†, and its use was submitted to by our Blessed Lord himself‡. Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God§," and we find it to have been the custom of the Apostles in baptizing to use water||. The form consists of the words which Christ himself commanded to be used when He instituted it. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost**." We have scripture instruction for the part we perform. Peter said to them "who were pricked in their heart"

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

§ John iii. 5.

† Matt. iii. 6.

|| Acts viii. 38; x. 47.

‡ Mark i. 10.

** Matt. xxviii. 19.

at his preaching and anxiously inquired, “ What shall we do,” “ repent and be baptized*.” Philip required belief†. St. Paul tells us that, “ as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ‡.” And St. Peter says, “ Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ§.” “ This then is the part we have to perform ; the blessings we expect and hope for are “ the remission of sins and” “ the gift of the Holy Ghost||.” I trust this Sacrament will now appear plain and reasonable to you and its importance raised by these deep considerations. But as I shall have occasion to go farther into its use in a future Article, I forbear to say more concerning it at present. It is my desire merely to prove to you how truly it is a Sacrament of Christ ; this done we will proceed to the other ; that of our Lord’s Supper ; here we may observe that it also has matter, or material substance. The bread and wine ; form ; the giving it to be eaten and drank with appropriate words ; divine institution ; Christ said, “ this do in remembrance of me**.” An act on our part ; shewing forth, “ the Lord’s death till He come†† ;” and the blessings conveyed to us ; our participation in the benefits of His death and passion, and our fellowship one with another in Christian love and charity : here again are all the requisite parts of a Sacrament ; we must also discover whether we have scripture authority for laying so much on this ordinance. We find the matter or material substance was used by the Saviour in

* Acts ii. 38.

|| Acts ii. 38.

† Acts viii. 37.

** Luke xxii. 19.

‡ Gal. iii. 27.

†† 1 Cor. xi. 26.

§ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

His own institution of it: " As they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins*." In this quotation we perceive there are the requisite parts; visible substance; form; and institution; from it we may also draw the duty or act required of us, which is to keep His death in remembrance; and the benefits to be expected, remission of sins; but St. Paul saw it necessary to add the duty of self-examination, because the Corinthians abused this holy ordinance by unworthily and slightlying partaking of it; but this subject also is included in a particular Article of itself, and therefore having shewn that it partakes of the nature of a Sacrament I have nothing more to observe upon it in this place. It remains for us to examine how far we are justified in rejecting those other rites received by the Romish church; and first as to Confirmation. Our church receives *this as a rite, but not as a Sacrament*. We find that after Philip had converted and baptized persons in Samaria, Peter and John were sent there by the Apostles to lay their hands on such, and to pray that they might "receive the Holy Ghost†." Now in the times of the Apostles, extraordinary effects or miracles were permitted even in the use of ordinary acts of religion, for the furtherance of the gospel; but such do not now continue; consequently although it is doubtless a useful rite that those who in their infancy were received into the church by baptism should, when they come to an age to understand the nature of that covenant, openly

* Matt. xxvi. 26—28; Mark xiv. 22—24; Luke xxii. 19, 20.

† Acts viii. 12, 14, 17.

avow their faith and intercst in it ; yet we are not to expect supernatural effects from the ceremony by which that profession is made. It was evidently considered in this light by the Apostles, for they reckon it as one of the Christian principles* ; and it was reserved for the head of the church or Bishop to perform, as the receiving the personal profession of the Baptized Christian, confirming him in his resolutions and praying especially for the gift of the Holy Ghost upon him, being a most serious, important and solemn act ; still it is no Sacrament, although to give it some appearance of one the Romish church has added to it an oil for matter ; it was not our Lord's institution, nor is it necessary to salvation ; it is a useful ordinance, wisely established for the benefit and assistance of Christians in their walk in righteousness, but nothing more. The next duty received by the Romish church as a Sacrament, and which we deny to be such is that of Penance or *penitence*, which signifies a change or renovation of mind, according to its derivation from the Latin translation of the Greek. It consists of several acts of the mind which Christ has made a condition of the New Covenant (as we have already noticed), but cannot be justly said to possess the nature of a Sacrament, for it has no instituted form, neither has it substance or matter. True penitence consists in an humble sense of our own sins with confession to God, faith in His pardon† and an entire change and amendment of life ; this is the whole of the consideration of our church regarding it ; without which we cannot receive forgiveness of sins, for we cannot take the prescribed means for obtaining it by praying to God for pardon, and we cannot pray for pardon unless we see and confess our sinfulness ; thus one part depends upon

* Heb. vi. 2.

† 1 John i. 8, 9.

the other and no true repentance can exist without the union of these two. But it is the internal working of the mind ; there is nothing of outward necessity. True and acceptable repentance may exist in the believer without being seen or known to any but his God ; nevertheless without a change of life such repentance is worthless and vain. We next proceed to the consideration of a particular state of life, called by the Romish church a Sacrament. I mean Orders, or the form of consecrating men to the ministry in the church. We do indeed appoint a special and solemn service to it, for we consider it to be a subject of the most vital importance not only who are admitted into so responsible a situation but also in what manner they are admitted ; we believe it to have been the intention of Christ, as we find the Apostles did so, and believe, as inspired men, they acted upon divine command, to appoint a succession of Pastors of different ranks over His church for the furtherance of the gospel, the right regulation of church matters and the care of souls ; we find St. Paul directed what description of men should be chosen as Bishops and Deacons* ; he likewise mentions the ordaining of elders†. We also find their manner of devoting men to these offices was that of, “ laying on of hands‡.” And St. Paul earnestly entreats Timothy, “ Neglect not the gift which was given *thee* by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the Presbetry§.” Yet still we do not esteem this order a Sacrament ; it has no divine institution ; no substance or matter ; and the form is merely a following of the Apostles which is expedient and useful, but not necessary to salvation. In their times the “ imposition of hands,” carried with it a real supernatural

* 1 Tim. iii. 1—14.

‡ Acts vi. 6.

† Tit. i. 7, 8, 9.

§ 1 Tim. iv. 14.

benefit ; it was the appointed means for receiving the Holy Ghost ; but now miracles have ceased and we must only look to the efficacy of earnest prayer to obtain such a blessing. Into the great use and expediency of such an order this is not the place to inquire : we shall meet with an especial article on that head also ; we have only now to do with it as rejecting or holding it *as a Sacrament*. And I think you must find it clear according to our view of that solemn subject, that this does not partake of its nature. The next state of life called by the church of Rome a Sacrament, is Marriage. Our church acknowledges marriage as an ordinance of God. It was first made when man was in a state of innocence, and thus originated in the law of nature, and although we have many directions and admonitions concerning it in the gospel, yet it cannot rightly be called a Sacrament, as there is no instituted form, neither material substance by which we are to expect and receive the effects and benefits of a Sacrament : neither is it a state necessary to salvation. It is lawful and binding whether contracted by one form or another, provided it be according to the established rules of the church to which the parties belong, and this proves that there is no divine form instituted for it. It is a wise regulation of our church to regard this ordinance as solemnly as it does ; much evil would accrue were it otherwise. But there is nothing that can partake of the nature of a Sacrament in it, as must appear plain to you from what has been said : we therefore need not enlarge upon it farther, but pass to the next which is Extreme Unc-
tion received by the Church of Rome as a sacrament and denied to be so by us.

Let us examine in what it consists, and how it first came into the Church. In the commission given by our

blessed Lord to His disciples was the power of healing the sick, regarding which St. Mark tells us, they “ anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them* ;” and here it may be as well to remark that it was always customary among the prophets to use some outward symbol when they performed miracles, thus Moses had his rod ; Elisha his staff, or Elijah’s mantle, and even our blessed Saviour was pleased to make use of some symbolical action, when He put His finger into the deaf man’s ears and made clay to anoint the eyes of the blind man ; oil was almost in continual use among the Eastern nations ; it was therefore not to be wondered at that the Apostles chose it as their symbol in working miracles ; but far from being used as a passport to heaven, as it now is by the Romish Church, they anointed the sick for their *recovery* as St. James tell us. “ Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up†.” This plainly indicates a miracle to be performed by prayer, and anointing to have been used as a sign or symbol ; it was generally supposed that all sicknesses were occasioned by some signal offences committed against God ; consequently the removal of sickness was looked upon as a sign of pardon, and the knowledge of these facts tends considerably to clear our view of these words ; still this was no sacrament ; it was no ordinance of Christ ; and indeed as used by the Romish Church, there is no mention of it for some centuries after Christ. Being the accompaniment only of a miraculous power, when miracles ceased, it was no longer useful ; but the Church of Rome, pretending to that power of work-

* Mark vi. 13.

† Jas. v. 14, 15.

ing miracles, and finding it failed of its effect of healing, was pleased to change its nature and intention, and apply it as a dying sacrament; one which they profess to consider will remit sins, and give all the assistance necessary to the departing soul: that this doctrine is full of dangerous mischief, it requires only to be acquainted with it, to acknowledge; and it is thus the administration of the miraculous power of healing by unction has been corrupted by this Church, and it is in a like manner that the other states of life, and acts of the mind, have been by degrees added to or corrupted, in order to the making of them sacraments. I have shewn you upon what grounds we reject these five as sacraments, and have endeavoured to point out to you the manner in which we receive confirmation and orders, as holy offices handed down from the Apostles and particularly expedient for our use. Marriage it has also been proved to be a proper and important thing to establish in a holy manner, and to use prayers at its solemnization. True repentance we hold as that state of the soul without which we can have no hope of acceptance with God; and extreme unction as we have no pretension to the power of working miracles, so we reject it altogether, nor can we consider it either as a sacrament or beneficial to the soul, which in scripture we find was a rite that accompanied only the cure of the body. The last part of this article concerns the use of sacraments; it forbids any others than those ordained by Christ. It is a most lamentable thing that what He has instituted "as pledges of His love," and for our great and endless comfort, should be turned into an occasion of sin by carrying about or gazing with superstition upon them, which leads unavoidably to adoration or idolatry. The water in baptism and the

bread and wine in the Lord's supper, are consecrated for their use, and not to be kept afterwards and reverenced ; there is no power retained in these as elements, for the efficacy consists in the whole of the sacrament and not in a part of it ; and as to the unworthily receiving them, I have in the first part of this exposition spoken regarding it. In this case they are useless and worse than useless, for persons unworthily receiving either of them purchase to themselves damnation, that is to say punishment, such as sickness, afflictions, or weak conception of spiritual things, or death* : the pretension that sacraments have intrinsically any good effect of themselves without the requisite qualifications of faith and earnest prayer, is to bring the idea of a superstitious spell over the doctrines of our Christian religion ; it is a notion tending to weaken the importance of piety, devotion and holiness of life, because in such case their efficacy would be the same whether received worthily or unworthily. We therefore consider sacraments as visible actions whereby, as they have been appointed by Christ himself as a means, we have our inward devotion assisted. It is our duty to perform them as the commands of Christ and the means by which he has promised to accord us grace ; but if received without due feelings of faith and prayer they can have no good effect, but do draw down upon us God's wrath, in as much as we pretend to an obedience which is in His sight hypocritical and vain. These reflections ought to deter all from approaching the altar without repentance, faith, and a desire to lead a better life for the future ; but this need not keep any away : if you stay away you sin, and if you come unworthily, you sin equally. Reflect seriously, my dear ———, on the consequences on either side,

* 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

and pray to God to enable you to do His will with sincerity. Another error but too frequently fallen into by members of our Church is that of regarding the Lord's supper as a dying act; or deferring obedience to this command of Christ, until their dying hour. Such is quite opposite to its intention. I would not say that it is then a useless ceremony, because we may not set bounds to His mercy, and He can see what we cannot, and may behold sincerity and faith in the dying reception of the Gospel which He may be pleased to reward; but I would not hazard a dependence on it, such was not its original use; it was a remembrance of our Lord's death*; and the custom among the Apostles and early Christians was to observe it frequently, at first every time they met for prayer, or at least every Lord's-day. You cannot, therefore, approach too often the altar of your crucified Lord, to renew your allegiance, to offer your prayers for a participation in the benefits of His death and resurrection, and to crave for pardon for your past transgressions: you cannot too frequently bring good resolutions to the foot of the cross to have them established, nor can you be too circumspect in your walk of life; this the frequency of your communication will naturally occasion. That you may be kept steadfast in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers is the continual desire of

Your faithful friend,

Refer to Gen. xxii. 9, 10; Exod. xii. 8, 29, 43, 51; xxiii. 14, 18.

* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

LETTER XXVII.

MY DEAR ———,

HAVING considered the holy sacraments of our Church, and proved their nature as well as the imperative necessity we are under of receiving them, our next duty is to ascertain how far the unworthiness of the persons employed to administer them, can affect those who partake of them. This constitutes the subject of the article which follows, and I purpose proving from Scripture as well as by reason, beyond all doubt, the fallacy of a thought of this kind, which might be productive of the greatest mischief and misery.

ARTICLE XXVI.

“ Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers which hinders not the effect of the Sacrament.”

Art. XXVI.—“ Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word, and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name but in Christ’s, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their Ministry both in hearing the word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ’s ordinance taken away by their wickedness nor the grace of God’s gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ’s institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men. Nevertheless it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.”

Such a provision and explanation as this the Church appears greatly to have needed, especially at the time when the Articles were compiled, when the Reformation brought to light the scandalous lives and actuating motive of most of the established clergy, and consequently gave great uneasiness to those conscientious persons who had made use of their ministry, and who feared they might thus have made themselves partakers with them of the indignation of their offended God; and by having received both Sacraments unworthily, have brought down upon themselves the damnation spoken of by St. Paul. A little serious reflection however with the study of the word of God, will soon, as it did then, place this matter in a very different point of view, and give comfort and relief to any who may yet entertain similar notions, and from their influence incur the danger of neglecting the important duty of frequent communion at the Lord's table. It is of the utmost consequence then to clear this point, and I think nothing independently of Holy writ, will tend more to do so than the calm reflection upon the consequences of the unworthiness of ministers affecting the success of their holy offices; was such the case, did the blessing of God depend on the sincerity and holiness of their motives, instructions, and prayers, to make the Sacraments really effectual to those they administered to, then a Minister might go through the form but he might not really baptize the person, and in that case many I fear who have been publicly received into the Church, and into covenant with God, remain still unbaptized, and therefore aliens from the promises therein contained; those also who have received the Lord's supper from such views would, by the same rule, be "guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and eat and drink their own damnation," and

this melancholy state of things would descend to thousands or millions of our fellow-creatures : for of course the unbaptized person would be unfit for any holy function even if properly ordained, and by the same rule if a Bishop did not ordain with truth he might go through the ritual, but the person so ordained would not really be one of God's Ministers ; there is no end to the mischief which this doctrine would produce ; and I think the notion of it implies a want of faith in the justice of God to suffer those who are sincere in their desires to be His servants, thus, not only to be shut out from all interest in the Saviour's atonement but to have additional sin united to their original corruption. But thanks be unto Him such is not the case ; for " who is Paul and who is Apollos but Ministers by whom, ye believed even as the Lord gave to every man*." Our Blessed Saviour's own words prove that it is possible for holy functions to be performed and accepted by God by the most unworthy men ; Judas was permitted to be of the number of the chosen twelve, singled out from among the other disciples to be always about His person, he even had the care of the bag† which contained (as we may reasonably suppose) the money for their necessities, and also that intended for the poor, and yet Jesus knew him and testified, saying, " Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil‡," and very plainly does He indicate that there will be both bad and good employed in the service of the Gospel ; when He instructed His disciples in this parable : " The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind ; which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away : so shall it be at the end of the

* 1 Cor. iii. 5.

† John xiii. 29.

‡ John vi. 70.

world*." He tells them also, " the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat ; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works for they say and do not†." Again, at the end of the world He says, " many will say to me in that day Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ?—and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity‡." Surely these words of the Holy Redeemer sufficiently demonstrate that He will accept the offices even of workers " of iniquity." If a blessing from the Holy Spirit had not accompanied their ministerial duties how would they have " prophesied," or " cast out devils," or done any " wonderful work ?" It would have been impossible ; yet our Lord admits that so it was. Their public duties therefore are blessed to those who with *faith and sincerity* accept their offices. St. Paul rejoices that Christ was preached even though he declared some preached him " of envy and strife§," yet was it matter of joyfulness because others might be benefited even by those unworthy instruments. Nevertheless it is a most important part of Church discipline to put out unworthy ministers whenever it can discover them. Paul wrote to Timothy that he should " receive not an accusation" against them, " but before two or three witnesses ;" yet when " an accusation" was thus established he desired, " them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear|| ;" and we cannot for a moment doubt the advantage of so doing. In an assembly of sinful, frail creatures it cannot but happen that evil be always mingled

* Matt. xiii. 47, 48, 49.

§ Phil. i. 15.

† Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

|| 1 Tim. v. 19, 20.

‡ Matt. vn. 22, 23.

with the good; but it is most essential for the glory and purity of the Church of God that it be kept as holy as possible, so that a strict eye ought therefore to be held over it by its superior head, lest lukewarmness, covetousness, or any unworthiness creep in among those who ought to be its peculiar guardians. It is negligence amongst these, that brings the cross of Christ into disrepute; it loads the clergy with reproach and through them is fixed with relentlessness, rancour on religion itself, and, we may justly fear, doth bring down upon the Church the wrath of God for the punishing the wicked and idle shepherd. This is an awful consideration, and may we all as a nation take it to heart, and both clergy and people consider our ways and walk in the paths of duty to our God and to each other. Still though we believe the unworthiness of Ministers of no material import to those using their ministry, yet there can be no greater blessing to a congregation than a truly pious, zealous pastor, and we may almost esteem it a curse to be placed under the care of one regardless of our soul's interest. It is true all men are not equally gifted, nor must we slight any because they are not greatly talented: "there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit," and we ought to avail ourselves of all or any which may be offered to us for our improvement; for although there are these differences ("one star differeth from another star in glory,") yet when they are sincere they are instructed by the same Spirit, and that Holy Spirit will manifest itself in zealous endeavours and industrious efforts after the eternal welfare of all under his care; by these signs we may be assured of our pastor's truth, and if we be blessed with such a one, though he should have but common abilities, still we ought to depend upon him for comfort, and rejoice in him as a wise and faithful

guide. Should it be your lot, my dear ——— to be placed under a careless pastor, yet use his ministry in faith ; do not scruple to receive the sacrament from him. All things that he commands you from the Bible's authority "observe and do," but "do not after his works ;" pray for him (as is your duty towards whatever minister you may be placed under) and reverence him in his office. Should you be so doubly blessed as to have a conscientious pastor and one who has indeed tasted of the heavenly gift, and who is endowed with a large portion of the light of divine truth, you cannot be too grateful to God. Your duty is then obvious and easy ; you will naturally listen to his injunctions with increased satisfaction, and you will find real pleasure in imitating his conduct. Such a blessing is inexpressibly great to any congregation. If we had a large body of such men the Church would stand without fear against all its enemies. By fear I would not have you to understand a fear of being lost, or in reality injured. No ; persecuted it may be, but to the real Church the worst sufferings will prove only a scourge for its ultimate good, and it will come out refined but not hurt. I mean the fear of trouble—that it may justly dread ; although "no weapon formed against it shall prosper," yet it may have a fiery ordeal to go through : the time may even now be at hand for a struggle between the true and false Church, but, confident in the power of God, we must meet such a trial with fortitude, and though the love of many appear at present to wax cold yet we may hope that in the event of such a struggle coming on, numbers of its lukewarm professors and ministers, and even those now estranged from its communion, would crowd around the standard of the Lamb in the form of our beautiful and Apostolic Church. Adieu, my dear

— ; that such a consummation may one day take place, is and ought to be the prayer of every Christian ; when there will be one fold and one Shepherd, Jesus Christ the righteous. Unite your prayers with those of the Church for that blessed time.

Your faithful friend,

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Refer to Isa. liii. 7 ; Jer. xxiii. 1—4 ; Mal. ii. 1—10.

LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR — ,

WE have now attentively examined into the meaning of a Church, and its authorities. We have carefully inquired into the nature of Sacraments and the number acknowledged by the Protestant Church. We have also seen that the unworthiness of the Minister through whom we receive them, does not lessen their effect on true believers who perform their part in faith. It now remains for us to consider the Sacraments especially by themselves that we may have a right judgment of them, and understand how much and wherein we may depend upon their benefit ; for to conceive that a bare form will alone prove useful is to turn the purity and reasonableness of our religion into a superstitious charm or spell. Bear in mind that although many things are above our finite comprehension, yet that there is nothing in the Gospel covenant contrary to it. When we conceive contradictory notions of God and His ways, we then think unworthily of Him. His acts all tend to one end ; they are parts of one system. They are as “ One day known ” only “ to the Lord.” He has endowed us with reasoning faculties, and though we are not to depend on them with-

out divine assistance, for, to believe absurdities, is as highly displeasing to the “Giver of all good things,” as to set up the gift above the Giver, and to make reason our entire guide. What He tells us in His Word He requires us implicitly to believe, and when too high for us to enter fully into, He requires us to bend our reasoning faculties to faith, acknowledging it to be our ignorance and weakness that obscures the meaning. Nothing unjust or in any way otherwise than infinitely good, can belong to God ; consequently it is the pride of human intellect, which, hating to acknowledge itself ignorant, would, rather than do so, make the Deity an unholy thing. Hence the frequent melancholy proofs of contradictions and absurdities in the professed belief of many otherwise well-disposed Christians ; but I have been carried into a longer disputation on this subject than I had intended, yet I trust not uselessly, for it is a point I fear too often overlooked, especially by the young Christian. I will now proceed to the Article we purpose to look into without further preliminary.

ARTICLE XXVII.

“Of Baptism.”

Art. XXVII.—“Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened ; but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby as by an instrument they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church. The promises of forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed : Faith is confirmed and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”

As Circumcision was the initiatory rite of the Mosaic dispensation so is baptism of the Christian ; it is in its outward act, the admittance into the body of the Church, that is to say of the society of believers, and to all their rights and privileges; but it is not only the badge or outward sign of profession, it is a sign also of regeneration ; it is a sign of God's favour, and a means by which we obtain acceptance with HIm if duly received. We have in a former Article examined its nature, form and institution. We need not again take the same steps ; you are convinced from what was advanced that it bears the nature of a Sacrament ; let us now turn our thoughts towards its use and what it requires as necessary on our part to the due reception of it. We are taught to expect " remission of sins," and " the gift of the Holy Ghost*." In baptism we are told we are saved " by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost† ;" but then it must be more than the form of it by which we receive this regeneration, it consists in faith and repentance to make this a Sacrament and to receive the benefits of one. It must be accompanied by earnest prayer, and then " by the Spirit are we all baptized into one body‡." By it we " receive the adoption of sons, and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba Father§." The Holy Ghost is promised in this Sacrament by John the Baptist, who says, " I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire||." And although this has particular reference to the miraculous

* Acts ii. 38.

§ Gal. iv. 5, 6.

† Tit. iii. 5.

|| Matt. iii. 11.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

baptism of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, yet we may reasonably believe and hope that it also infers an inward and spiritual grace given unto the faithful in baptism under the Christian covenant. The water we use signifies to "put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*." Washing is not only "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God}." Water is an apt symbol of this cleansing and purifying, and as in Eastern countries where the disciples first dwelt it was and still is the custom to use constant bathing, so the manner of baptizing was, by going entirely through the water; from which it seems more than probable St. Paul drew the simile of being "buried with Him in baptism; wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead†" and thus was also typically shown forth the resurrection which we hope for through Christ, for "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death," "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life§." Here then is an additional pledge or sign of our true baptism, the "walking in newness of life;" if we only go through the form without the spirit of this holy Sacrament it will produce no such fruit, and we shall be still included amongst the number of those who believe not; Christ says "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned||." And again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom.

* Col. iii. 9, 10.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 3, 4. .

† 1 Pet. iii. 21.

|| Mark xvi. 16.

‡ Col. ii. 12.

dom of God*." Ananias the disciple of our Lord at Damascus, who was sent unto Saul after his conversion and called upon to restore him his sight, after knowing all that had happened to him, and that he was "a chosen vessel," exclaimed, "and now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord†," and thus joins prayer with the form of admission into covenant with God by baptism; "for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ‡." It appears necessary to say a few words as to the equal propriety of baptizing by sprinkling as is done in cold countries, as by immersion in warmer climates; the use of water being only a sign or symbol of something spiritual, it is equal in its efficacy or acceptance with God whether we use sprinkling or entire immersion; the latter would be dangerous in a cold country, and we are not so superstitious as to think that we should not suffer because it is used in a religious ordinance; we have no reason to expect God would work a miracle for such a bold tempting of Him; it is the heart He looks to, and although forms are necessary means, and baptism, as Christ's command§, is a Sacrament in the neglect of which we cannot hope to be received into His covenant; yet He has not set down any peculiar manner of its performance excepting that water is to be used; consequently we do esteem all who are Christened according to the Church of England, rightly and duly admitted into the true Church. As to the admittance of children in this manner we have for our example the Mosaic dispensation which received them when eight days old into the covenant of works; and shall we refuse them admission into our more merciful cove-

* John iii. 5.

† Gal. iii. 27.

‡ Acts xxii. 16.

§ Matt. xxviii. 19.

nant of grace? Our blessed Saviour when the disciples forbade those who brought them to Him, "was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God*." As infants then cannot it is true have either repentance or faith, these are answered for them by their sureties or sponsors; they are by inheritance the children of wrath; they are born in corruption; but they have no actual sins to need repentance and forgiveness from the Saviour; they are therefore brought to him to be admitted into a state without which they cannot be heirs to eternal life: and when we reflect upon these points, it seems impossible that we should disapprove the custom of infant baptism. The sponsors promise and undertake for them what is for their undoubted advantage, and should they live to see their benefit they will rejoice in their early dedication to the service of God, and be thankful for having been made partakers of such inestimable blessings with the hopes of a future life of glory. Sponsors are wisely required by our Church in order that those infants who should lose their parents, or in case the natural protectors of their youth should err in bringing them up in religious matters, they may have other spiritual guardians, and so their soul's health may be doubly provided for; we have therefore no cause to find fault with infant baptism, especially as our Church has taken such peculiar care of her younger members in the ordinance of confirmation which she strongly urges at an age when they are capable of entering into vows in their own persons; at a time too when they are likely to be beset with new temptations by mixing with the world, and will require all the panoply of divine grace to keep them from "the evil." It is thus a wise custom

* Mark x. 14.

to admit infants into covenant with God, and one which will ever be sanctified by the holy example of God's people in the Old Dispensation and which our blessed Lord Himself condescended to fulfil. May you see the advantage you have gained by being thus early devoted to God, my dear ———,

And believe me,
Your sincere friend,

———.

Examine Gen. xvii. 12 ; Exod. xii. 44, 45.

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LETTER XXIX.

MY DEAR ———,

HAVING treated on the first Sacrament received by our Church, we now come to the consideration of the other, in order the more fully to determine the manner in which we ought to partake of it, its uses, and the benefits we may hope to derive from its reception, and also to restore it from the superstitious abuses of the Romish Church to its primitive intention and the doctrine of the Apostles.

ARTICLE XXVIII.

“ Of the Lord's Supper.”

Art. XXVIII.—“ The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another ; but rather is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death ; insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

“ Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

“ The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.”

The great leading feature in the religion of Christ, and His coming into the world, is love or good-will towards man, and “ if God so loved us we ought also to love one another*.” The communion in the Lord’s supper is a very natural and pleasing sign of the unity of feeling which ought to dwell in the breast of every individual who in common with each other is an inheritor of the divine promises ; but the Sacrament now under our consideration is not only a sign of Christian fellowship and love ; it is rather a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ’s death, “ insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.” Let us see how far we are borne out by Scripture in such a belief. This holy ordinance was instituted by Christ at His last celebration of the passover with His disciples, which was a Jewish rite commanded to be observed by them for their deliverance out of Egypt by Moses. You must remember that

* 1 John iv, 11.

when the children of Israel were in bondage under Pharaoh, God “saw their affliction,” and “heard their cry,” and sent His servant Moses to bring them out of the hands of their cruel oppressors, but “Pharaoh would not let them go,” and God worked many miracles, by the hands of His Prophet Moses and his brother Aaron, in order both to assert their authority and to punish and persuade the king; still he was obstinately determined to keep them under his yoke, till at length that most awful plague was sent, the death of all the first-born of the Egyptians. The night previous to this dreadful affliction God commanded His own people, the Israelites, to take “to them every man a lamb,” and “kill it,” and take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it; “they were to eat the flesh in that night,” and to “let nothing of it remain until the morning,” “it is the Lord’s Passover.” God also informed them of His intention, and that in smiting the first-born of the Egyptians He would pass over those houses which had this token on them, and not destroy them*; and he commanded that this ordinance should be from that memorable time observed by the Jews for ever. This rite is typical of our Saviour’s sacrifice. He is called, “our Passover†,” for he is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world‡.” It was therefore at the celebration of this typical ordinance, that our Lord saw fit to institute another which like that should commemorate a deliverance—the former from the bondage of Pharaoh, the latter from the power of sin and Satan; and also to perpetuate His all-sufficient sacrifice of Himself for His servants to the end of the world. After the Jewish supper or passover, there were loaves of bread, and cups of wine, placed on the table; it

* Exod. xii.

† 1 Cor. v. 7.

‡ John i. 29.

was therefore a natural act in our Lord, who always fixes on the most common objects for His service, (in order to avoid the tendency to superstition or idolatry in His followers,) to take this bread and wine and institute the Christian Sacrament with it. It is recorded by St. Luke that, “ He took bread and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying ; this cup is the New Testament in my blood ; which is shed for you*.” St. Matthew adds, “ Drink ye all of it for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins†.” This simple manner of bequeathing an ordinance to His followers plainly indicates the nature and intention of it, which as St. Paul tells us, “ as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord’s death till He come‡ ;” and that those who bring to this Sacrament faith, repentance, charity (feelings which are requisite at all times to form the very character of Christ’s disciples) and a hearty desire after God’s blessing to enable them to live according to His word, may expect to partake spiritually of His body and blood, or as our blessed Redeemer himself said, to have the Father and the Son abiding in them,” “ that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us§ ;” and as our beautiful Church service expresses it, “ for then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us.” And is not this aptly poken of by St. Paul when he asks, “ the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? the bread which we break is it not the communion

* Luke xxii. 19, 20.

† Matt. xxvi. 26—28 ; see also Mark xiv. 22—24. *

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

§ John xvii. 21—23.

of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread*." Bread is also an excellent symbol to be made use of in the Lord's Supper. Being the common food of the body, it fitly represents the vivifying food of the soul, which is, Christ, and without which we can have no life in us. It is this spiritual communication which Christ teaches us that all who will be saved must participate in, when He says, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." "I am that bread of life." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world." "Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." "Many therefore of His disciples when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, doth this offend you?" "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life†," thus mercifully condescending to explain to His erring servants the true manner in which they were to be partakers of Him. But it remains that we take notice of that doctrine of transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, which the Romish Church holds, and which we say cannot be proved by Holy Writ. We do not find any grounds for such an opinion in that simple institution of Christ's which we

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. † John v. 35, 48, 51, 53, 54, 60, 61, 63.

have just considered, or in any part of the Apostle's doctrine or practice to authorize such a notion. Neither will reason itself bear the idea of the real presence of God entering the substance of any portion of that food which is received into our bodies as a natural nourishment. Such a doctrine is repugnant not only to Scripture but to every reverential feeling of the majesty or spirituality of the Deity. Besides, if such a miracle were performed it would be a useless one, and effectually do away with the notion of a Sacrament being a *sign* or *outward symbol* merely of an inward and spiritual grace. If it is really the body and blood of Christ it is no longer a sign or representation of it. This doctrine of the Romish Church with that of infallibility also, is one on which she principally builds her faith, and is an abuse which has crept into it by degrees. It derived great strength from the support of the Popes, who, desirous of gaining as much power as possible, have worked upon the credulity of the people from whom they shut up the Word of God and thus prevent their examining the truth for themselves. This false doctrine has caused the most awful superstitions, inducing the people to worship and adore the elements used in this Sacrament; consequently making them idolaters of earthly objects; nor did it make its appearance until many centuries after the Apostles' time. Whatever we have no authority for from Scripture, and whatever is repugnant to those senses given us by God to be used, we ought to reject as unworthy and sinful; this is one of those doctrines.

The Body and Blood of Christ are received after a spiritual manner only, by means of a right faith in the promises He has made us; a means of gaining which is obedience to His commands. It never was the intention of our Lord that this awful and holy ordinance should be reserved, carried about, lifted up or worshipped; such

a custom would unavoidably engender a sort of superstition and might lead to idolatry. It seems natural to revere or at least not to treat lightly any thing which had by prayer been consecrated to a holy service; it is therefore wisely ordered by our Church that all the elements consecrated at the table of the Lord should be consumed, and for the sick who desire to approach their Lord by performing His dying injunction for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls, our Church provides that a Priest or Minister may consecrate bread and wine before them in their chambers, to commemorate their redemption by Christ and all the blessed benefits of His passion. Let not any superstitious feeling, therefore, possess your mind, my dear ———, in performing this your "bounden duty and service." Look to the spirit of the divine ordinance, and remember He whom you approach "is a Spirit," and only condescends to use bodily tokens in order to bring His meaning to a possibility of being comprehended by your finite understanding. He regards your heart and will accept and bless you with especial favour in this holy communion, if you bring to Him one filled with faith, repentance, and love; but if you do not prepare yourself thus for its reception you will not receive a blessing, but a curse; seeing you put your Saviour to "an open shame," and reproach, by bringing to God a hypocritical and scoffing spirit. St. Paul tells us to "examine" ourselves, and "so" to "eat of that bread and drink of that cup*."

Believe me,

Your faithful friend,

Refer to Exod. xii. xiii.; Num. ix. 5; xxxiii. 3; Deut. xvi. 2—5; 2 Kings xxiii. 23; 2 Chron. xxx. 15; xxxv. 1—11; Ezek. xlvi. 21.

LETTER XXX.

MY DEAR ———,

THE next article may be almost regarded as a part of the last, so naturally does it appear to proceed from it, and if it has been satisfactorily proved that our Church is correct in her view of that one, there can remain not the slightest difficulty in acceding to this. But I will transcribe it at once without further preface.

ARTICLE XXIX.

“Of the wicked which eat not the Body of Christ, in the use of the Lord’s Supper.”

Art. XXIX — “The wicked and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ; but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.”

Enough has surely been already advanced on this subject on a former occasion to prove to you its truth, and it seems scarcely necessary to have devoted an article to it especially; the reason for this having been done was doubtless to counteract the sad effects of the Romish belief on this point; for if the real bodily presence of our Lord were in this Sacrament, then the wicked would as truly participate in Him as the righteous, and His word, that those who “eat of this bread” should “live for ever*,” would be made “of none effect†.” St. Paul tells us, “he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord’s

* John vi. 51.

† Matt. xv. 6.

body*," and the blessed and beloved John said, "if we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth†." If faith and prayer are necessary to a due reception of the grace offered us in the Lord's Supper, then it is evident that the wicked, that is, those who persist in sin, and do not repent and endeavour to live according to the Gospel, cannot receive a blessing in this ordinance, for "we know that God heareth not sinners‡." Nevertheless allow not the fear of the curse threatened to unworthy partakers to frighten you, if you are penitent and sincerely desire amendment of life. It is those who do not regard their duty who are in danger. If you stay away from the Lord's table until you are without sin, you will stay away till the day of your death. By the wicked are only meant here such as go on still in their wickedness unimpressed by the warnings of God and regardless of their soul's health, not humble Christians who, conscious of sin and infirmity, bring "a hearty sorrow for these their misdoings," and "find the burden of them intolerable." Such will ever meet with acceptance, and Divine mercy, to pardon and assist their endeavours. The holy Supper of the Lord will become the blessed means of reconciling such to the Father through the all-sufficient merits of the Son, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, to whose guidance and protection you are earnestly commended, my dear ———, by

Your sincere friend,

———.

* 1 Cor. xi. 29.

† 1 John i. 6.

‡ John ix. 31.

LETTER XXXI.

MY DEAR —————,

THE next part of the subject concerning the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which claims our attention from having been made an article of our Church, is whether the laity, that is, those who are not the clergy, may receive the cup as well as the bread. You will be doubtless astonished that the idea should arise of separating what our Saviour has so plainly united, but the Romish Church has done so among her many abuses and corruptions, and as we conscientiously protest against her errors, it is necessary in forming articles of faith to take notice of what we deemed errors, and warn the members of our Church against those faults; this is expressed in the following article.

ARTICLE XXX.

“ Of both Kinds.”

Art. XXX.—“ The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.”

It is a remarkable circumstance, and the consideration of it tends to exalt our feelings of security in the pre-knowledge and over-ruling protection of our Lord for His Church, to observe that against many, or even most of the abuses and corruptions into which it has fallen, there are express injunctions in His word; this justly leads us to believe that He who foresaw all that would befall it when left to the management of weak men has thus set a fence about it, that His true followers might always have it in their power to form a clear and correct judg-

ment from His own Word of the fitness of the tenets they hold, and also have sufficient light against the danger of falling into all errors ; in no one instance do we more peculiarly observe this double guard than in that before us.

At our Lord's first institution of His Supper we may notice that of the Bread He simply said, "Take, eat, this is my body;" but when delivering the Cup to His disciples He adds, "Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins*." Does not this injunction appear like an especial safeguard from the error of forbidding the cup to the people ? St. Mark also mentions of the cup, as if in prophetic anticipation of this abuse, that "they all drank of it†," while neither of the Apostles gives more than a simple narrative of the receiving the bread. We are sure it was administered in both kinds by the Apostles, for St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians to reprove them for their negligent use of this holy ordinance, says "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup‡." We find no mention of dividing the elements. This is sufficient proof against such an abuse, and we ought to feel the deepest gratitude to God who in His revealed Word has taken such peculiar care of His Church as to enable us thus to bring positive injunctions and commands against what is merely a corruption of man's own device, and which did not even appear for many centuries after the time of the first propagation of the Gospel ; wonderful are His ways who thus gives us power over the Prince of darkness and all his machinations. Truly must we be astonished at the credulity and wickedness of those unhappy beings who seek to know better

* Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. † Mark xiv. 23. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 28.

than their Lord and His Apostles, what is expedient in the Church. But our pity for their errors must not lead us to open our hearts to their arguments against one of Christ's express commands. Nothing can be more simple or intelligible than the account given us by the disciples of His institution of this Sacrament, and we are happy in being able to continue its celebration in a manner resembling its original administration.

To divide a sacrament is, as we have before observed, to do away with its nature as such, and to render it in fact no Sacrament. But while we condemn the practice of the Romish Church, we must be careful not to condemn the numberless beings who in ignorance retain those errors of a church in which they were born; the unadulterated Word of God is not allowed to them that they may read and judge for themselves; and we may reasonably hope God will not require at their hands the impiety they are guilty of through ignorance. It is our evident duty to pray for them, but not to judge them; it is also our imperative duty to exert ourselves diligently in disseminating the Word of truth as far as possible: this is the only means by which we can entertain a hope of seeing the true Apostolic form of worship gain ground, for conviction is the sweet and only honorable way of bringing intellectual beings to God. And do not suppose that this privileged blessing of turning souls to righteousness and light is limited to a small number of Christ's servants—all have it within their power to assist in extending His kingdom and bringing wandering sheep into the fold. However narrow your sphere of action may appear, my dear ———, remember it never can shut you out from the power of

giving your earnest prayers to this corrupted church ; you may at least spread the knowledge of the Word of God among your immediate connections and servants or the poor about you ; and remember such a work will not lose its reward. It is a blessed privilege to be permitted even in the lowest situation to labour in the vineyard of Christ ; it is moreover your duty, and never forget that the influence of a single Christian has and may still extend far and wide. It is impossible indeed to set bounds to the power of one good example. Ages unborn may be influenced by it ; by the same rule we cannot limit the baneful effect of a wicked one ; it will run like a corrupted stream, tainting all it comes in contact with, never losing but rather increasing in strength until it reaches the true source and end of all evil in the kingdom of Satan. There is a curse on the works of the evil, and there is a blessing pronounced on the deeds of the servant of God, but let all be done in Him and to Him—in His strength and to His glory, for He alone can give your labours power. In vain may “ Paul sow” or “ Apollos water” unless “ God give the increase ;” but in Him is strength and everlasting power, and by him your works, your prayers, your desires, will all appear as shining lights in the day of account, if performed in strict dependance on the Lord Jesus, casting from you all self-confidence, through His righteousness, imputed by the Holy Spirit unto you. “ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem—they shall prosper that love thee.”

I ever remain,

Sincerely your friend,

—

LETTER XXXII.

MY DEAR —————,

THE next subject to which I have to call your attention is the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice of Himself for the sins of mankind, which renders His one oblation a perfect redemption and consequently does away with the necessity of any other sacrifice. The Romish Church considers, as it says, that the real bodily presence is contained in the elements of the bread and wine, thus making the Lord's supper each time they partake of that sacrament another offering up of Christ for sin; whereas we, denying such superstition, and holding the Lord's supper as He instituted it, the commemoration only of that great sacrifice, declare our belief in the sufficiency of His one oblation. This may appear to have been already treated on and proved in a former article, and so it has; but you must bear in mind they were drawn up originally not merely as bonds of union for ourselves, but in opposition to the errors of Popery; therefore it was necessary to form particular and positive articles against those corruptions which appeared to the more enlightened reformers (called in scripture "witnesses" to divine truth) to be the most dangerous faults, and those which that erring church held most tenaciously. This consideration will be sufficient explanation for the requisition of another article, which otherwise would have been a needless repetition.

ARTICLE XXXI.

"Of the one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross."

Art. XXXI.—"The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for

all the sins of the whole world both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone: wherefore the sacrifices of masses in the which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

The pernicious and unscriptural doctrine of masses for the dead, by which the Roman Church acquires a considerable degree of wealth, receives a downfall in this article; that sacramental rites and prayer performed by priests could be beneficial in ameliorating the condition of the departed soul were fables held by this corrupted church, but we have already given abundant proof, in the examination of the article concerning purgatory, that any such change after death does not take place, but is most contrary to the divine character of the Gospel. It is declaring that Christ's death is an imperfect satisfaction; whereas we read in the word of God that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*;" and if this blood is sufficient our High Priest Jesus Christ, "who is consecrated for evermore," and is "made a surety of a better testament" than that of the old law, which consisted in "ordinances," "rites," "ceremonies" and "sacrifices" typical of Him who was to come, "needeth not daily as those High Priests to offer up sacrifices," "for this He did once when He offered up Himself†," and "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself‡." In this oblation He hath accomplished for us a perfect redemption, for God Himself hath declared that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," "for God sent

* 1 John i. 7.

† Heb. vii. 22, 27, 28.

‡ Heb. ix. 26.

not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved ;" " He that believeth on Him is not condemned but he that believeth not is condemned already," and " shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on Him*." In Him also we have an effectual propitiation. " If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world†,"

This sacrifice is also a perfect satisfaction ; for we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ " once for all ;" St. Paul then goes on to describe how the sacrifices made by priests under the old law could not take away sins, and adds, " but this man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God ;" " for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And again he even more forcibly declares, " there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," for where " remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin‡." We who confess, therefore, and believe that we have remission only through Christ's death cannot hold with any other sacrificial offerings ; we deny all possibility of repentance after death ; we utterly reject any efficacy in the prayers of the church for those departed this life as unbelievers, and we refuse to consider the sacrament of the Lord's supper in any other light than as a commemorative act instituted by Christ to shew forth His death, a means of obtaining the grace and assistance of God, and as a communion of fellowship and love between His followers. And now, my dear ———, each ar-

* John iii. 16, 17, 18, 36. † 1 John ii. 1, 2.

‡ Heb. x. 10, 12, 14, 18, 26.

ticle relating to the sacraments is finished. Our church has wisely seen fit to be peculiarly explicit on their nature and use, for the express purpose, as I have before mentioned, of declaring her faith in opposition to the dangerous conceits of the church of Rome, from which she has separated; on the subject of the Lord's supper and the infallibility of the church originated its principal errors; it became necessary therefore to be particular on these points in the formation of our Articles. I trust you see no room for doubt, but that your faith has received additional strength from their contemplation, and that the reasonableness and simplicity of our tenets, as well as the beautiful harmony of our excellent liturgy, has become more and more apparent to you; so will you join in its services with increasing profit to yourself and acceptance with your God.

I am, anxiously your friend,

LETTER XXXIII.

MY DEAR ———,

AGAIN are we brought to observe the care taken by our church to counteract the errors of the Romish Church and her provision for the comfort of her ministers in discovering the vain conceits of it, and in forbidding to lay upon them a yoke not required of God but rather repugnant to His laws, I mean that of denying them the liberty to marry or not, as they may deem expedient.

ARTICLE XXXII.

“Of the Marriage of Priests.”

Art. XXXII.—“Bishops, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God’s law either to vow the estate of

single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them as for all other Christian men to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness."

If we look to the Mosaic Dispensation for a guidance as to the lawfulness of marriage for God's peculiar servants, the ministers of His Word, we shall find the denial of such liberty to be plainly contrary to the intention and mercy of God which required that the priests should be all lineally descended from one tribe and even one family of that tribe. Moses himself, their great law-giver and the type of Christ, was married; so also was Aaron, and so were all the Levitical priests in general. If we turn to the first period of the Gospel Dispensation all doubt must fade away, for we find our Blessed Saviour shewing no preference in the choice of single men for His disciples. St. Peter was a married man, and yet he was one of those three who were peculiarly favoured by His choosing them to be with Him in His most private acts of mercy, at His transfiguration on the mount and in His hour of deepest agony in the garden; and St. Paul must have been aware of the extent of his liberty, for he speaks of his "power to lead about a sister, a wife," if he pleases "as well as the other Apostles and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas*," and gives divers directions for the conduct of Bishops and their wives saying, "a Bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife," and "let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well†." Here is sufficient evidence of the custom and carefulness of marriage among the earliest Apostles and ministers; we may

* 1 Cor. ix. 5.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12.

therefore conclude with St. Paul that "marriage is honourable in all*." The Romish Church had an object worthy of herself when she forbad this liberty among her clergy; she saw that by so doing she should condense their interests into one body, and so enforced this law to bind together and aggrandize her own wealth, as well as increase the respect of the lower orders by making the clergy appear as beings of a superior kind, who neither lived nor were disposed to live as other men: the bad effects of such a law were felt and acknowledged as history abundantly shews, and we as Christians following the Apostles' doctrine and practice have done away with it, believing it a departure from the faith, which St. Paul foretells would come to pass in "the latter times," "when some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth†." Alas this is but too faithful a picture of the Romish Church in all its particulars. May you who are born and educated in one so much more merciful and so evidently more in union with Him "who will have mercy and not sacrifice," devote yourself seriously and assiduously to its service, and pray for the enlightening and easing of your suffering brethren under the Popish yoke.

Believe me ever faithfully your friend,

Refer to Exod. iii. 1, 28; Num. xii. 1—16.

* Heb. xiii. 14.

† 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

LETTER XXXIII.

MY DEAR ——,

CONFESSING as we do that while on earth, no body of men can be free from sin, and that it will appear even in the regenerate and but too often prevails, it becomes necessary, in order to preserve the Church of Christ as pure as possible, that notice should be taken of the members belonging to it who behave unsuitably to its perfect tenets, that Christians may separate from all such for the purpose of keeping themselves pure, and also that, by thus showing their abhorrence of sin, such persons may be brought to see their sinfulness, and by the grace of God may be reclaimed from persisting in iniquity ; this then forms the subject of the next Article.

ARTICLE XXXIII.

“Of excommunicate persons, how they are to be avoided.”

Art. XXXIII.—“That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful as an Heathen and Publican until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the church by a judge that hath authority thereto.”

The reasonableness and expediency of this proceeding must be evident to every thinking mind, and greatly is it to be lamented that our church has fallen out of the habit of abiding by this rule. Its disuse may be accounted for by the abuse of this power which prevailed in the Romish Church, which has caused us in throwing off her rigour to fall into the opposite extreme ; we find it was considered as the duty of minis-

ters in the times of the Apostles, openly and publicly to rebuke those who lived in sin, and to put out from among the faithful those who did wickedly. St. Paul desires, when giving his advice concerning the person who disgraced his profession of Christian, and who brought reproach upon the Corinthian Church, that " in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," adding, " now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one, no, not to eat,"— " put away from among yourselves that wicked person*." And again he writes to the Thessalonians, " now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walkefth disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us,"— " for even when we were with you this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat," and " if any man obey not our word by this epistle note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed†." And to Titus he gives this advice, " a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject‡;" and the lawfulness of the Church in this respect we may argue from the words of our Lord himself, " if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican§." But this power was not to be exercised without " the spirit

* 1 Cor. v. 11, 13.

‡ Tit. iii. 10.

† 2 Thess. iii. 6, 10, 14.

§ Matt. xviii. 17.

of meekness*,” that such persons who had been taken captive might “recover themselves out of the snare of the devil†.” And surely if undertaken properly this is a most useful preventive of evil, and we ought not to hesitate to give it into the hands of God’s Ministers considering what St. Paul says, “obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account‡;” and if they really do thus watch over the souls of their flock they must in the conscientious discharge of their duty, rebuke the sinful, and if need be (that is, if he will not repent but goes on obstinately in notorious bad living) put him out from among the faithful and deny him those blessed privileges which a communion in the Lord’s supper affords. This is the express duty of every Minister, and much is it to be regretted that they do not more strictly follow it up; the effort would be replete with advantage to the purity of the Church. Fear of publicity, shame before others, might deter many from sin when no better feeling influenced them; and when the evil was thus carefully rooted out, good would most probably spring up; faithful Christians would be encouraged and many might be led to follow their example until a worthier motive should be implanted, and by degrees the congregation of each Parish Church would be refined and purified. Such carefulness would not only redound to the good of the people but would be “a crown of rejoicing” “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ,” to all such faithful shepherds. That it might please God to increase the number of those Pastors who are faithful in their high calling, should be your earnest prayer; pray for the ambassadors of God’s word, and especially for him under

* Gal. vi. 1. † 2 Tim. ii. 26. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

whom God has seen fit to place you, that fearless of the reproach of men each may follow the direction of St, Paul : " Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*."

Yours sincerely,

LETTER XXXV.

MY DEAR —————,

WE now find an article to determine whether it is necessary that the government of Churches in every place should be alike, and how far their dissimilarity is lawful and consistent with the Gospel intention of Christ's followers, all forming but one body. I will transcribe the article before I enter into its scope and meaning.

ARTICLE XXXIV.

"Of the Traditions of the Church."

Art. XXXIV.—"It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places, one, and utterly like; for at all times they have few divers and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's maners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church which be not repugnant to the Word of God and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church and hurteth

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

the authority of the Magistrate and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.—Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.”

As to the authority of the Church concerning ceremonies, its government and discipline, we have already seen by the XXth article that it is lawful and right that it should decree and change whatever (being of man's authority alone) is expedient for the advantage of the different places in which it may be placed. It is not necessary that in every particular each Church should be alike in its forms and habits, provided the mutual love and universal fellowship of the Church of Christ be kept entire. A body of men composed of different nations may be one in spirit, and in truth, without necessarily having every little outward form and rite the same; indeed it is incompatible with the state of the world that every Church should be alike in these points, although it is earnestly to be desired as much as possible to retain a unity and resemblance. The dangerous consequences of each man's using his private judgment, (which probably differs in trifles and about forms, as the constitution of the body is unlike in different men, so the private feelings may, taking a tincture from the constitution, differ;) and changing with every opinion, would lead to endless disputes and confusion about matters immaterial to the vital part of Christianity. It is therefore judged advantageous by our Church, and commanded in Scripture for the peace of that body, and the advantage and comfort of its Pastors, “obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief,

for that is unprofitable for you*.” It is not unfrequently the case that some Christians see things in a clearer light than others, who are equally sincere, but whose stronger judgment is a stumbling block towards the weaker; it is then the duty of the more enlightened to be tender and not to make a brother offend, “for the kingdom of God is” “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost†.” St. Paul felt doubtless the mischief of such divisions when he said, “let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God‡.” And he commanded the Corinthians who were inclined to confusion when he was absent from them, “if any man seem to be contentious we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God§.” He especially charges them that they should not make their liberty a stumbling-block to the weak, arguing “through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? but when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience ye sin against Christ||.” “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another**.” Such is our duty and much for the advantage of the Church; all are not strong in Christ, but require to be fed “with milk as babes,” being, “unskilful in the word of righteousness.” “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil††.” Nevertheless the weak brother is as acceptable unto God, as the stronger; “for if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not accord-

* Heb. xiii. 17. .

§ 1 Cor. xi. 16.

† Rom. xiv. 17.

|| 1 Cor. viii. 11, 12.

‡ Rom. xiii. 1.

** Rom. xiv. 19.

†† Heb. v. 13, 14; see 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

ing to that he hath not*." It is required that the best powers be given unto God, but what may be the best in one, may be the weakest in another; so there can be no rule of measurement for any to judge by but themselves. We must exert every power and bring every talent into use in the service of God; we must "press toward the mark," with all our energies, "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and strengthen the weak, bearing their burthens, "submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake†," and bringing our stronger minds down to the simplicity of a little child's in all that is deemed expedient, so that we offend not the brethren.

Ever consider me sincerely your friend,

Refer to 1 Kings xii. xiii.

LETTER XXXVI.

MY DEAR _____,

THE next article relates to the Homilies, which are writings similar to our sermons and which were ordered to be read in the Churches in their stead, immediately after the Reformation; they point very decidedly against the errors of Popery, then prevailing, and in fact it was chiefly on this account that they were directed to be read at that time, because the minds of the clergy were not sufficiently settled, and many of them were deemed insufficient on account of their partiality and fear of persecution; these things hindered their preaching the gospel with boldness and sincerity against

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13.

the doctrines of the Church from which they had so recently separated. Now let us examine the decrees of our Church regarding their sermons, or lectures.

ARTICLE XXXV.

“Of the Homilies.”

Art. XXXV.—“The second book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this article, doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine and necessary for these times as doth the former book of Homilies which were set forth in the time of Edward the VIth, and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers diligently and distinctly that they may be understanded of the people.”

“Of the Names of the Homilies.”

1. *“Of the right use of the Church.”*
2. *“Against p̄ril of Idolatry.”*
3. *“Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches.”*
4. *“Of good Works, first of fasting.”*
5. *“Against gluttony and drunkenness.”*
6. *“Against excess of apparel.”*
7. *“Of prayer.”*
8. *“Of the place and time of prayer.”*
9. *“That common prayers and sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue.”*
10. *“Of the reverend estimation of God’s word.”*
11. *“Of alms-doing.”*
12. *“Of the nativity of Christ.”*
13. *“Of the passion of Christ.”*
14. *“Of the resurrection of Christ.”*
15. *“Of the worthy receiving of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.”*

16. " *Of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*"
17. " *For the Rogation days.*"
18. " *Of the state of matrimony.*"
19. " *Of Repentance.*"
20. " *Against Idleness.*"
21. " *Against Rebellion.*"

It is only necessary to read these Homilies attentively to discover how purely scriptural are the doctrines therin contained. To attempt to give even a sketch of each would extend this letter too far and exhaust your patience. I certainly recommend them to your notice as containing a beautiful code of Christian duty and practice, which will amply repay your trouble in reading them: the times have gone by for their being absolutely requisite, at least the errors they particularly reprobate are not so probable to arise now as formerly. How far we have reason to dread their re-entering the Church of Christ, God only knows. Our clergy are not however ignorant of the dangerous consequences of such practices at this period, and it is earnestly to be hoped they will not be idle in teaching the people the true and only acceptable faith. The Homilies are excellent patterns for sermons, and fervently may we desire that our Christian Pastors may put forth the Word of God with the like sincerity and boldness which they evince. Adieu, my dear ———; that you may be blessed by being placed under the care of a faithful Minister of Christ is the earnest hope of

Your affectionate friend,

—————.

LETTER XXXVII.

MY DEAR ———,

WITH respect to the following Article, which concerns the spirituality, of the form of consecrating our clergy to their Holy office, it is doubtless of importance for us to feel that it is according to God's word, and therefore it has been made an article of our church, that such as are ordained by a certain book set forth for that purpose, are rightly ordained, as it is expressed.

ARTICLE XXXVI.

“Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

Art. XXXVI.—“The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops and Ordering of Priests and Deacons lately set forth in the time of Edward the 6th, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it any thing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that book since the 2nd year of the fore-named King Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites, we deem all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.”

Fully to ascertain for yourself how far the form of ordination is according to Scriptural doctrine, it would be necessary for you to examine it, and it is sometimes placed in the Book of Common Prayer (particularly in old ones) as we may suppose, for the satisfaction of any who wish to look into it. The form we use in this ceremony is that of prayer with laying on of hands, by

which it is designed to shew forth the dedicating or devoting the person to God's peculiar service; and invoking the Holy Ghost to rest upon him, guiding, and assisting him in all his Ministerial duties. We have the custom of the apostles for our example in this respect, when they appointed the seven Deacons mentioned in the Acts, when "the whole multitude" pleased with the proposition of having men selected by those holy men to teach and take charge of them, "set" certain men "before the apostles, and when they had prayed they laid their hands on them".* Thus were "Barnabas and Saul" separated "for the work," by the immediate command of the spirit, and when the prophets and teachers, "had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away".† St. Paul mentions this custom of laying on of hands in ordination of Ministers to Timothy more than once, as we have already noticed in the proof of the XXVth article, when we considered the nature of orders; we may therefore conclude that such as are thus ordained to the ministry of the word, are truly accepted by God as His peculiar servants of the sanctuary, and are to be received as "ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by" them to be "reconciled" to Him.‡ It is of the greatest importance both for our own sakes as well as for the furtherance of the gospel that we look up to those who are so ordained, with respect and becoming reverence; and it must be surely evident to you of what benefit it is for us to have a certain fixed form by which to appoint these ministers, for if every man might take "this honour unto himself" the confusion which would arise must be endless, and the disputes and irregularities

* Acts vi. 6. † Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 20.

of such proceeding inevitable, to the injury of the reception of divine truth. It is therefore a subject for thankfulness to God (who has transmitted a form by the conduct of His first gospel teachers) that we have such ; and as infallibility is not held by our pure Church, we must continue to pray earnestly that He “will so guide and govern the minds of his servants, the Bishops and Pastors of His flock, that they may make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of His Church, and that He will give His grace and heavenly benediction to all such as shall be ordained to any holy function ; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth His glory and set forward the salvation of all men ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

And believe me,
Your attached friend,

Refer to Exod. xxix. xxxix. ; Num. viii.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MY DEAR —————,

We now come to our duty towards the king as his subjects, and to magistrates or civil officers appointed by our sovereign for the welfare and happiness of his people and the country in general. It is thus fixed by our Church.

ARTICLE XXXVII.

“ *Of the Civil Magistrates.*”

Art. XXXVII.—“ The King’s Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of England and other his Dominions,

unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not nor ought to be subject to any foreign Jurisdiction. Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments the which thing the injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God Himself; that is, that they should rule all states and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers.

“The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England.

“The laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences.

“It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.”

This article was drawn up with much reference to the casting off entirely the domination of the Pope; we have therefore given our reigning monarch, the charge of the Church in his kingdoms, and have made him ruler and governer over it as far as man's authority can extend. Scripture points out to us our duty in respect to our lawful sovereign in the plainest terms: our Lord Himself not only showed His own subjection to an earthly king, but commanded, “render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's,” yet that this might not infringe on our duty to God, He adds, “and unto

God the things which be God's*. St. Paul directs obedience to all civil magistrates: "Put them in mind," he writes to Titus, "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates†." To the Romans he also writes, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers;" "the powers that be are ordained of God," and he adds, "for he beareth not the sword in vain‡;" consequently we may judge it lawful that the sword or punishment be used toward offenders (though they be included in the profession of Christian men) who commit heinous crimes. St. Peter is even more explicit: "Submit yourselves," says he, "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well§." We may also argue from our blessed Lord's answer to the soldier who demanded of Him saying, "and what shall we do?" that He permits their profession even among His followers, for He did not reprove their calling or business, but merely advised them how to bear themselves well in it, answering, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages||." Doubtless He knew the causes there would be for wars (much as His gentle nature must have deprecated them), and aware of the dreadful state His people would in all possibility be brought into if not permitted to defend themselves, He mercifully allowed it. As regards the jurisdiction of the pope in this realm we utterly disclaim it, as we in no place of scripture find that

* Luke xx. 25.

† Rom. xiii. 1—4.

† Tit. iii. 1.

§ 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

|| Luke iii. 14.

St. Peter (from whom they pretend to descend, and take their supremacy) was exalted over the rest of his fellow-apostles; in fact, we find he was contended against by them in some instances*. His naturally extreme impetuosity of disposition had led him into an unadvised act, for although an inspired man, he was still a human creature and subject to the influence of his nature, and St. Paul "withstood him to the face at Antioch, because he was to be blamed† :" this does not look like superiority over the rest. It is from a false construction of these memorable words of our Lord that this notion is sometimes attempted to be maintained : " And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church ; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven‡ ;" but we must not so carelessly review His words ; it is necessary that we examine into the causes for this speech, and into the subject on which he is descanting. The former part of this memorable sentence (from which the Romish Church argues her infallibility) was spoken by Jesus in allusion to faith, and confession of Himself : it was spoken at the conclusion of His questioning His disciples as to the opinion men entertained concerning Him ; and on their relating to Him the various notions then in circulation regarding His character and person, He turned to His own chosen twelve with the simple and affecting appeal, " But whom say ye that I am ?" Simon Peter answered and said, " Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus

* Acts xi. 2. † Gal. ii. 11. ‡ Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

“blessed him,” for this noble and bold confession of his faith, and then declared He would build His Church upon this faith, as upon a rock which the gates of hell could not prevail against. The name of Peter or Cephas is, being interpreted, a stone, or rock, and is not unaptly appropriated to the man whose bold energy so often made him strong to confess his Lord; the latter part of the sentence is repeated to the Apostles in another place, and merely relates to the power which was to be given them after his ascension, to enact laws in the formation of the Church by the assistance of the Holy Ghost. The keys of heaven were then given to all the Apostles to bind or loose* though we are not wrong in ascribing them in a more eminent degree to Peter, who actually opened the kingdom of heaven by being the first to preach the Gospel after the resurrection, both to Jews and Gentiles†; and we may consider this especial favour as a reward or token of our Lord’s pardon of his denial, and a proof of His acceptance of his forward and affectionate confession. He was the first to acknowledge Him as the Son of God; and He was thus allowed to be the first to testify of Him to the world. I trust it is now made perfectly clear to you, my dear _____, and that you do not feel disposed to give this one Apostle an unjust pre-eminence, who though especially honored was still subject to the passions of men, and who more than once called down upon himself the severe reproof of the same divine Master†; one instance of which is recorded immediately after the approving remark of his Holy Lord, as if the praise he had just received made him forget his dependant state. Indeed it is but

* Matt. xviii. 18. † Acts ii. 14; x. xi.

‡ Matt. xvi. 23. See also Mark viii. 33, and Luke iv. 8.

natural to imagine that the same warm energetic feeling which prompted his lively affection towards his Master, would lead him into other extremes ; he felt quickly and strongly, and thus it ever happens : each disposition bears with it, its own peculiar frailty ; the strong disciple—the bold, enthusiastic, energetic, affectionate Peter was the *only* one who absolutely *denied* the Saviour* ; how little we should have suspected *him* of cowardice at the time when he made his noble confession, and yet how weak is man ! The courageous Peter, so jealous of his Master's honour, at one time, was as visibly alive to his own danger at another ; that he was forgiven we have abundant reason to be certain of, and his repentance was as bitter, as his knowledge of sin, with his ardent love to the Saviour could render it, and afterwards his ministry continued firm and constant unto the end, even to its termination by martyrdom. This review of St. Peter's character and failing may be considered a sufficient proof of his fallibility, and it positively throws down all idea of his being superior over the rest of his brethren, the Apostles. But let us regard this interesting history of Peter, not only as it concerns the Church in general, but as applicable to each individual person. It is full of instruction and warning, and while it teaches us the blessed reward we may hope for, if we boldly confess the Lord Jesus, it also reminds us of the frailty of the strongest natural mind, and bids us keep ever present to our memory, that even to one of Peter's fine and energetic kind there are its own peculiar temptations which can only be guarded against by double vigilance in ourselves, and by the power of the

* Matt. xxvi. 69—75. Also Mark xiv. 66—72, and Luke xxii. 54—62.

Holy Spirit. The unrenewed nature is enmity against God. Satan will strive to “sift such as wheat,” for he has only to attack the feelings and affections of such to gain his point. Peter’s affections were quicker than those of the other disciples, and our Lord warned him of his approaching danger ; but as if to comfort and support him added, “when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren* ;” he was not then “converted,” at this time ; his heart was untouched by the saving power of the spirit ; his feelings were excited but he was as yet *unrenewed*. How vivid a picture is here shewn of every unregenerated heart, and how much should it induce each person who fancies he is safe “to try and examine himself” lest like Peter he may be following in the train of his Master’s servants, depending on his own strength, and unconverted. Peter denied the possibility of his forsaking his Lord, and he fell into the very crime he deprecated. Yet it was but for a time, for Christ “had prayed for him,” that his “faith” “should not” utterly “fail.” Beautiful efficacy of the Saviour’s prayers ! Follow this pardoned Apostle to the end, and see how truly he laboured and suffered for his faith. The weak Peter became strong, and the ardent, self-confident Peter, humble ; and though the natural man was not entirely subdued (for while on earth who can put off the infirmities of the flesh ?) yet he was converted and boldly confessed his Lord even among his persecutors and destroyers. Reflect often upon this interesting and instructive history. May it be found by you replete with advantage.

Believe me,

Your faithful friend,

* Luke xii. 31, 32.

Refer to 2 Kings xii. 7; xxiii. 21; 1 Chron. xvi. 4; xxiii. 6; xxviii. 21; 2 Chron. viii. 14; xvii. 8, 9; xxvi. 17—20; xxx., xxxi.; Isa. xl ix. 23.

LETTER XXXIX.

MY DEAR —————,

IN treating on the following article I do not anticipate that many could be found to disapprove or doubt its justice and safety; the very fact of its being otherwise than is therein expressed would be a cause of endless ruin to both nations and individuals, and idleness and misery would be the result. The Church therefore wisely foreseeing the danger of the idle taking from the industrious, and thus falsely applying the early practices, (caused by that peculiar situation of affairs in general, and the necessities of those who were called to labour for the gospel,) to the present times, has provided for the comfort and security of her members, by not allowing their goods to be considered common to the use of any, to whom they are not voluntarily proffered by the rightful possessors.

ARTICLE XXXVIII.

“Of Christian men’s goods which are not common.”

Art. XXXVIII.—“The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding every man ought of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor according to his ability.”

Although it certainly was the practice among the first Christians to provide for the poor, and for the Church, by selling all they possessed and laying it at the Apostle's feet, yet it as certainly was never an act of necessity or compulsion ; it was voluntary as we see by St. Peter's reproof and argument with Ananias, who endeavoured to deceive the Apostles in the price he had received for his land, desiring to appear eager in the cause of religion by applying his riches, as many zealous Christians had done, for the benefit and furtherance of the Gospel. " Whiles it remained," said St. Peter, " was it not thine own ? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power* ?" shewing there was no compulsion in such a proceeding. He might do so or not as seemed best or most pleasing to him, but to pretend a zeal he did not feel, to act from the desire of vainglory as a man-pleaser, was sin, and for this he was punished. Yet the giving of alms is not only a sacrifice well pleasing in the eyes of God, but it is a duty inculcated in Scripture : " Give alms of such things as ye have† ;" says our blessed Lord ; and again St. Paul directs Timothy to " charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate‡ ;" and although our goods are our own and may not be taken from us even for purposes of charity ; yet it is our duty and one for which we are promised a reward, to " give alms," for " blessed," says our Lord, " is he that considereth the poor ; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble§ ." Then with faith " cast thy

* Acts v. 4.

† Luke xi. 41.

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

§ Ps. xli. 1.

bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it" again though "after many days*." If we would indeed experience the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven we must especially exercise charity towards our distressed brethren, which Christ has promised shall be received as if done to himself†; and what though our means be small and our power circumscribed; He who knoweth our necessities will accept the widow's mite with the same mercy and approval as the rich man's offering‡; for He looketh to the heart, and "a cup of cold water" given in the spirit of Christian love and for the gospel's sake, will "in no wise lose its reward§."

Ever believe me,

Your sincere friend,

Refer to 2 Chron. ii. ; Ezra. i. 4.

LETTER XL.

MY DEAR —————,

We have now only to consider the last remaining article which has been wisely framed in order to meet a scruple which may naturally arise from a deep sense of the purity of Christ's religion, and his express command against common swearing, or oaths, and to prove to the tender conscience that it is lawful to take an oath when required by the magistrate for the good of society in general.

* Eccles. xi. 1.

† Luke xxi. 4. Mark xii. 41, 44.

‡ Matt. xxv. 40.

§ Matt. x. 42.

ARTICLE XXXIX.

“Of a Christian man’s oath.”

Art. XXXIX.—“As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his Apostle, so we judge that Christian religion doth not prohibit but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophets’ teaching in justice, judgment and truth.”

We confess that our Saviour Christ has forbidden all vain and rash swearing in those words, “ Swear not at all ; neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne ; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King ; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black ; but let your communication be yea, yea ; nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*.” Yet we conceive He does not by this injunction condemn the taking an oath of verity for the sake of truth and justice, but has a more particular regard in it to the common conversation and dealings of men with each other. In the daily intercourse of life, vain and rash swearing is strictly against the law of God ; it is taking that Holy name into our lips without the reverence which should ever in our minds accompany its use and utterance ; and often through habit, that blessed name of truth and love, is called on to confirm a lie or to render more dreadful the imprecations of passion, revenge, and rage—the name of blessing is used to ratify spite and cursing : awful consideration—

* Matt. v. 34—37. See also James v. 12.

every curse called down on the head of an enemy falls with double fury on that of the blasphemer. But to matters of law and justice, which are required for the sake of solemnity to be affirmed by oath, God's prohibition does not extend. For our proof of this view of the subject we may refer to the practice of the apostles, who not only permitted this custom but used it themselves in cases of extreme urgency. St. Paul appeals to "God" as his "witness* ;" again he affirms His conduct to have been kind, "as God is true," and calls "God for a record upon," his "soul† ;" and again, "behold before God I lie not‡." St. John shews in his description of the angel in his Revelation, who stood "upon the sea and upon the earth," how it is lawful to swear in important matters, for he "swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever" "that there should be time no longer§." It is therefore justly considered not to be displeasing to God, or contrary to the rules of the Gospel, to take an oath in matters of importance, provided it be done for the furtherance of faith and charity and according to truth; for "an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife||," as St. Paul mentions when descanting on God's oath with Abraham: here then our difficulty and our scruples end. This is our last article of union, and I trust it, as well as all we have previously considered, meets with your candid and full consent. Most earnestly do I trust you have no doubt remaining as regards the purity and Apostolic form of our Church; I hope you see the nearness to the primitive custom of the Gospel, and will feel no hesitation in declaring yourself one of its members in your approach-

* Rom. i. 9 † 2 Cor. i. 18—23. ‡ Gal. i. 20.

§ Rev. x. 5, 6. || Heb. vi. 16.*

ing confirmation ; I shall address you once more before that important period arrives, but now conclude with earnest prayers for your welfare, both temporal and eternal.

Believe me,

Most truly your friend, "

Refer to Exod. xx. 7 ; Deut. vi. 13 ; 1 Sam. xxiv. 21 ; Ps. cx. 4 ; Jer. iv. 2 ; Isa. xliii. ; lxv. 16 ; Zech. v. 3 ; Mal. iii. 5.

LETTER XLI.

MY DEAR ———,

My interesting task is now completed and I earnestly hope your mind has been clearly and pleasantly led through a study of the articles of that Church into which at your baptism you were received, and in which at your confirmation you profess yourself satisfied and desirous of continuing a member. I have endeavoured to explain to you those points of faith especially necessary to salvation ; and have dwelt with length on those also which *our* Church holds in opposition to the *Romish*, and may God have vouchsafed His blessing on both of us in this examination. You cannot now profess your intention of remaining a member of a Church whose tenets you do not understand, and it behoves you seriously to reflect on the part you have to take in the approaching rite of confirmation. You are well aware of your *danger* if you hesitate to receive Christ as your Saviour, but you cannot yet conceive your happiness if you do stedfastly

receive Him as your Head, for His gift is the "peace which passeth all understanding." "Search the Scriptures," with earnest prayer to God: and then make your choice. Use the freewill He has bestowed on human nature, and if after steady, calm reflection, you determine to enlist anew under the banner of the Redeemer, persevere in supplication for the Holy Spirit to enable you to keep the vows you are about to make—to strengthen and accept your oath of allegiance. Do not look to yourself for power to do this. Your "help is in the name of the Lord," and doubt not that help will be afforded if you feel your need of it and ask for it. You have been regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit and have had your sins forgiven you at your baptism; that is to say, you had the privilege bestowed upon you of entering into the new covenant, and were accepted through Christ by means of His own appointed ordinance, to these benefits. Do not fear but you have been favourably received, and that the blessed Trinity has taken you into covenant and will guide you into everlasting life if you will henceforth perform your part of it. Remember that by nature you are a child of sin, thereby obnoxious to the wrath of God; that from this deplorable state you have been rescued by the free grace of the Father, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, and for the sake of the Son alone. Without the conjunction of the Holy three in one you cannot now be saved from eternal death; by it you are crucified to the world, being buried in baptism with Christ, and consequently if you live in righteousness by Him, you will be a partaker of His resurrection, and an inheritor of His kingdom. Your Redeemer has purchased you with the price of His blood. You are therefore no longer your own—you are

His ; and with Him you may hope to reign and triumph over sin and the grave. But whilst you view these precious privileges with thankful thoughts, whilst your heart warms with these blessed hopes, cease not to bear in mind that you must pay your portion towards their attainment. You must obey His laws, and by your utmost exertions strive to live according to the pure tenets of the Gospel of your Master. *Faith* must produce *works* ; yet these works must be regarded only as its fruits ; they merit nothing although they are indispensably requisite to your salvation ; Christ has worked *for* you ; He must also be permitted to work in you by the Holy Spirit. It would be but a repetition, my dear _____, of all I have said to dwell on these points ; yet how anxious am I you should not overlook them. Let me beseech you to regard with stedfast earnestness your immortal interests ; they alone will appear valuable to you when you come to die, they are the only subjects which will never fly from you in trouble and affliction ; in short, it is at those times they will shine in their brightest glory, and when no earthly thing affords comfort or relief, but all is dark and drear, will keep their steady light before your eyes when you fall into danger or temptation, guiding you to peace above all this world can give, or take away. You are now young—you have before you probably much expected happiness—much worldly prosperity ; but oh ! if you would not have all your good things in this life only, remember there is one to come. Riches may make themselves wings and flee away. The brightest prospects of happiness may vanish as a dream, but the things of the other world can never fail ; they will continue firm and constant, and be enhanced by use and time. No disappointment attends *them*—no

wearing out—no decay, but they endure for ever. How different to the things of this fleeting world ; *they* are not *your own* ; *they* are not dependent on your will ; they are under the sovereign power and guidance of God, who can turn the universe with His word. If you are blessed with comparative happiness and ease, it is His gift. How reasonable then to make Him your friend from whom and by whom you receive all things. He may see fit to disappoint your dearest wishes. He can over-rule the most complicated scheme of human invention if He pleases, but if He does, it will be for some manifestly good purpose toward you ; perhaps to bring you nearer to Himself and real happiness, or to improve talents, which if not drawn forth by trial might lie dormant and so never rewarded ; or to correct you for unrepented sin which otherwise might not be discovered by you, and so destroy your soul : or to wean your immortal spirit from the fading pleasures of sense, to place them on the unfading joys at His right hand. “Fear not,” therefore, for He who is sufficient for all your wants, who loves you better than you know how to love yourself, will assuredly work in you your salvation if you give Him your heart. Never yet has the child of God been deceived as to His gracious intention in the end of even seeming evil. It may have chanced that at the beginning or through the lengthened trial, faith has almost failed, through the natural weakness of man, but if it has been resorted to with constancy, and the promises dwelt on with hope, it has never failed to overcome. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” and a joy far surpassing the perishing pleasures the loss of which were mourned. Our condition in this life may aptly be compared to a day, part of

it dark and perplexing, like the night and indistinct twilight ; the other bright and clear as the summer noon, while the sun dances over the landscape, making all bright and joyous ; such is the Christian life. Do not therefore allow distrustful thoughts to alarm you ; you have the *promise* of God's strength for your support. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins ; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee," and "I will remember thy sin no more." Be stedfast then and "hope to the end." The God of peace be with you. May He defend you with His heavenly grace that you may continue His for ever, and daily increase in His Holy Spirit more and more until you come unto His everlasting kingdom. May He lead you into the knowledge and obedience of His word. May He direct, sanctify and govern you, and may He so bless us here, that being cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, we may meet among the Redeemed in heaven, even though we shall have passed through much tribulation to the attainment of that holy habitation where "there shall be no more curse." May we meet there no longer distinguished as the teacher and the taught, but as servants of one Master, the Lord Christ Jesus, through whom and to whom let us consecrate "ourselves, our souls and bodies," daily. All we do, all we wish for, all we have now and for ever, let us hold as His ; at His disposal ; and to His glory : stedfastly believing that He knows best what is good for us, and surely confiding in His love, "that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all ; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" necessary for our salvation ? In the most trying times may we never lose sight of the assurance that He does all in mercy,

and if it be the taking from us our best beloved on earth ; it may be, indeed it is, merely the removing a stumbling-block out of our way, and the effects of that precious love which regards not our temporal but eternal interests. My dear _____, may you be one of His children. "Walk by the spirit ;" that is the requisition. May God be with you at your approaching confirmation and at all times ; may He shower down His blessing upon you, and seal you with His seal to everlasting life. And that in another world He may in mercy receive us both into everlasting happiness, is the earnest prayer of,

Your truly faithful friend,

_____.

APPENDIX.

TABLE OF PROPHECIES,

RELATIVE TO

THE MESSIAH AND HIS KINGDOM.

LIFE, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION.

1.—The Messiah should come.

PROPHECY.

FULFILMENT.

| | |
|---|--|
| Gen. iii. 15, xii. 3, xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, xxviii. 14, Psalm lxxii. 17, Isa. iv. 2, ix. 7, xi. 1, xl. 5, 9, 10, 11, Jer. xxiii. 5, Dan. ix. 24, Hag. ii. 7, Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12. | Luke ii. 1 to 16, John i. 45, Rom. xvi. 20, Gal. iv. 4, Heb. ii. 14, 1 John iii. 8, Rev. xii. 9, 10. |
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2.—When He should come.

| | |
|---|--|
| Gen. xlix. 10, Dan. ix. 24, 25, Hag. ii. 6 to 9, Mal. iii. 1. | Matt. ii. 1, 10, xxii. 20, 21, Mark xv. 43. Luke ii. 1 to 3, 5, 25 to 38, John i. 19, 45, xix. xx. 10 to 15. |
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3.—He should be God and Man together.

| | |
|---|---|
| Psalm ii. 7, cx. 1, Isa. ix. 6, Micah v. 2. | Matt. i. 23, xxii. 42 to 45, John i. 1 to 14, Rom. ix. 5, 1 Cor. xv. 47, Col. ii. 9, Heb. i. 8, 13, 1 John v. 20. |
|---|---|

4.—From whom to be descended.

PROPHETCY.

From, 1st, a woman.—Gen. iii. 15.

From Abraham.—Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3, xviii. 18.

— Isaac.—Gen. xxvi. 1 to 4.

— Jacob.—Gen. xxviii. 10, 14.

— Judah.—Gen. xlix. 10.

— Jesse.—Isa. xi. 1.

— David.—Ps. lxxxix. 4, 27, cxxxii. 2.

— — Isa. ix. 7, Jer. xxiii. 5.

5.—Should be born of a Virgin.

Isa. vii. 14, Jer. xxxi. 22. Matt. i. 18, 22 to 25, Luke i. 26, 31, 35; ii. 5, 6, 7.

6.—Where to be born.

Micah v. 2.

To be brought out of Egypt. 20; Luke ii. 4 to 6, 10, 11, Hos. xi. 1. 15; John vii. 42.

7.—That a Prophet in the Spirit of Elias or Elijah should be his forerunner.

Isa. xl. 3, Mal. iii. 1, 5, Luke i. 17. Matt. iii. 1 to 3, xi. 14, Mark i. 2, 3, Luke vii. 27, 28.

8.—The Messiah was to be a Prophet.

Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Matt. xxi. 11, 46, Mark. vi. 15, Luke vii. 16, xxiv. 19, John iv. 19, vi. 14, vii. 40, ix. 17.

9.—That he should begin to preach in Galilee.

Isa. ix. 1, 2. Matt. iv. 12 to 17, 23, Luke iv. 14, 15.

10.—Should confirm his doctrines by Miracles.

Isa. xxix. 18, xxxii. 3, 4, xxxv. 5, 6, xlvi. 7. Matt. iv. 23, 24, xi. 4, 5, xiii. 13, xv. 30, 31.

Yet for all these miracles they “should hear but not understand.” Isa. vi. 9. Mark iv. 12, Luke vii. 21, Acts ii. 22.

Innumerable other passages throughout the Gospels.

FULFILMENT.

Matt. i. 1, Luke i. 32, John vii. 42, Acts ii. 29, 30, iii. 25, xiii. 22, 23, Rom. xv. 12, Gal. iv. 4, Heb. vii. 14.

11.—In what manner he should enter Jerusalem.

PROPHECY.

Psal. cxviii. 26, Zech. ix. 9.

FULFILMENT.

Matt. xxi. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, John xii. 14.

12.—That he should be poor and despised, betrayed, and sold by one of his own disciples for 30 pieces of silver, with which the potter's field should be purchased.

Psal. xli. 9, lv. 12 to 14, Isa. l. 6, liii. 3, Zech. xi. 12, 13.

Matt. viii. 20, xxvi. 14, 38, 47, xxvii. 3 to 10, Luke ix. 58, xxii. 3, 4, John xi. 35, 2 Cor. viii. 9.

13.—He should suffer pain and death for the sins of the world.

Psal. xxii. 14 to 18, Isa. l. 6, liii. 5, 8, 12, Zech. xii. 10.

Matt. xxvii. 29 to 31, 35, Mark xv. 19, 20, 25, Luke xxii. xxiii. John xviii. xix. 1, 2.

14.—Should be cruelly mocked and derided.

Psal. xxii. 7, 8, 12, 13.

Matt. xxvii. 39 to 44, Mark xv. 19, 20, 31, 32, Luke xxiii. 11, 35, 36, John xix. xxii. 63, 1 Peter ii. 23, 24.

15.—That vinegar and gall should be offered Him on the cross and lots cast for His vesture.

Psal. xxii. 18, lxix. 21.

Matt. xxvii. 34, 35, 48, Mark xv. 24, 36, Luke xxiii. 34, 36, John xix. 23, 24, 29.

16.—Not a bone of Him should be broken but His side should be pierced.

Exod. xii. 46, Psal. xxxiv. 20, Zech. xii. 10.

John xix. 32, 33, 34, 36, 37

Matt. xxvii. 38, 57 to 60, Mark xv. 27, 28, 42 to 46, Luke xxiii. 33, 50 to the end. John xix. 38 to the end.

18.—Should rise again from the dead and ascend into heaven.

PROPHECY.

Psal. xvi. 9, 10, lxxviii. 18, Isa. liii. 10. Matt. xxviii. 5, 6, Mark xvi. 6, 19, Luke xxiv. 5, 6, 51, John xx. 9, 17, Acts i. 9, 10, 11, ii. 32, 33, xiii. 35, 37, 1 Cor. xv. 4, &c.

FULFILMENT.

19.—He should send the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Psal. lxxviii. 18, Joel ii. 28, John xiv. 16, 17, 26. Acts. ii. 1 to 4, 16 to 21, iv. 31, viii. 17, ix. 44, xi. 15.

PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE OFFICES OF THE MESSIAH.

1.—That He was to be a Prophet and Lawgiver like unto Moses, but superior to him, who should change the law of Moses, into a new and more perfect law, common to both Jews and Gentiles, which should last for ever.

Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19, also Isa. ii. 3, Acts iii. 22, vii. 37. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, Luke xxiv. 19, John i. 45, vi. 14, Heb. iii. 5, 6, vii. 18, 19, 25, ix. 24, 1 John ii. 1.

2.—He was to be a teacher.

Psal. lxxviii. 2, Isa. l. 4, liv. 13, lxi. 1. Matt. v. 1, 2, xiii. 34, Mark l. 14, iv. 33, vi. 6, Luke iv. 15, 44, viii. 1, John iii. 2.

3.—Was to instruct and enlighten men.

Isai. ix. 2. Luke ii. 32, John i. 4, 5, viii. 12, ix. 5, xii. 46, Acts xxvi. 18, Eph. v. 8.

4.—Was to be the Christ or Anointed of God.

Psal. ii. 2, lxxxix. 20, 51, cxxxii. 17, Isa. lxi. 1, Dan. ix. 24, 25. Matt. xvi. 16, xxvi. 63, 64, Mark xiv. 61, 62, John iv. 25, 42, vi. 69, xi. 27, Acts xviii. 28.

5.—Was to be a Priest.

Psal. cx. 4, (cited Heb. v. 6, vii. 21,) Zech. vi. 13. Heb. ii. 17, iii. 1, iv. 14, vii. 24, 28, viii. 1, x. 21.

6.—Was, by the offering of himself as a sacrifice for sin, to make an end of sin ; to make a reconciliation for iniquity ; to make men holy ; and to destroy the power of the devil.

PROPHECY.

Gen. iii. 16, Isa. liii. 6, 10,
12, Dan. ix. 24.

FULFILMENT.

John i. 29, Rom. v. 10, vi. 10
to 12, viii. 3, 1 Cor. vi. 20,
2 Cor. v. 15, 18, 21, Eph.
v. 2, Col. i. 20, 1 Thess.
v. 10, Tit. ii. 14, Heb. v.
8, 9, vii. 27, ix. 12, 14, 25,
26, x. 12, 1 Pet. i. 19, ii.
24, iii. 18, iv. 1, 2, 1 John
i. 7, ii. 2.

7.—He was to be a Saviour.

Isa. lix. 20, lxii. 11, Zech.
ix. 9. Matt. i. 21, Luke ii. 11, John
iv. 42, Acts v. 31, xiii. 26,
Tit. ii. 13, iii. 6, Phil. iii.
20, 2 Pet. i. 1, ii. 20, iii. 18,
1 John iv. 14.

8.—Was to be a Mediator.

Psalm lxxx. 17, cx. 1, Isa.
viii. 14, Dan. ix. 17, 19. John xiv. 6, 14, xv. 16, xvi.
23, 24, Eph. ii. 13, 18,
1 Tim. ii. 5, Heb. vii. 22,
viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24.

9.—An Intercessor.

Isa. liii. 12.

Luke xxii. 32, xxiii. 34, John
xvii., Rom. viii. 34, Heb.
vii. 25, ix. 24, 1 John ii. 1.

10.—To be a Shepherd.

Isa. xl. 11, Ezek. xxxiv. 23,
xxxvii. 24. John x. 11, 14, Heb. xiii. 20,
1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 2, 4.

11.—To be a King.

Psal. ii. 6, cxxxii. 11, Isa. ix.
6, xxxii. 1, lv. 4, Jer. xxiii.
5, 6, xxx. 9, Ezek. xxxiv. 24,
xxxvii. 24, 25, Hos. iii. 5,
Micah v. 2, Zech. vi. 13,
ix. 9. Matt. ii. 2, 6, xxi. 5, xxvii. 11,
Luke i. 32, 33, xix. 38,
John i. 49, xii. 15, xviii.
33, 36, 37, Acts v. 31.

12.—As a King was to be above all others, and Head of the Church.

| PROPHETCY. | FULFILMENT. |
|---|---|
| Psalm lxxxix. 27, 36, Dan. ii. 44, vii. 13, 14, 27. | 1 Cor. xii. 27, Eph. i. 21, 22, 23, iv. 15, 16, Phil. ii. 9, Col. i. 18, 1 Tim. vi. 15, Rev. i. 5, xvii. 14, xix. 10. |

13.—Messiah the King was to be exalted more particularly after His sufferings, and resurrection.

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|---|--|
| Psalm ii. 6, 8, viii. 5, Isa. liii. 10, 12. | Luke xxiv. 26, John xvii. 1, Acts ii. 32, 33, Rom. i. 4, Phil. ii. 8 to 10, Heb. ii. 9, xii. 2, 1 Pet. i. 11, 21, iii. 28. |
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14.—That there is Salvation only through Christ.

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| Isa. xxviii. 16, xlvi. 21, liii. 11, lix. 20, (see also Rom. xi. 26,) Zech. xiii. 1, Mal. iv. 2, Mark xii. 10. | Luke xxiv. 47, John iii. 16, xvii. 3, Acts iv. 11, 12, x. 43, xiii. 38, 39, 1 Thess. v. 9. |
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15.—Of the necessity of believing in Christ and the danger of rejecting Him.

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| Num. xv. 30, 31, Deut. xviii. 15, 19, (see also Acts iii. 23,) Psalm ii. 12. | John iii. 18. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, Heb. ii. 3, x. 26 to 29. |
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NEW TESTAMENT PREDICTIONS WITH THEIR FULFILMENT.

1.—That they would find things according to His word.

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| Matt. xxi. 1, 2, 3, xxvi. 18, Mark xi. 2, xiv. 13 to 15, Luke xix. 30, 31. | Matt. xxi. 4, 5, Mark xi. 4 to 6, xiv. 16, Luke xix. 32, xxii. |
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PREDICTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST, RELATIVE TO
HIS SUFFERINGS, DEATH, RESURRECTION,
AND ASCENSION.

1.—That He was to be betrayed by one of His disciples,
Judas.

PROPHETCY.

Matt. xvii. 22, xx. 18, xxvi. 2, 21, 46, Mark x. 33, xiv. 18, 20, 42, Luke ix. 44, xxii. 21, John vi. 70, 71, xiii. 10, 11, 18, 21, 26, xvii. 12.

FULFILMENT.

Matt. xxvi. 14 to 16, 47, 49, Mark xiv. 10, Luke xxii. 47, John xiii. 2.

2.—His other disciples would forsake Him.

Matt. xxvi. 31, Mark xiv. 27, Matt. xxvi. 56, Mark xiv. 50. John xvi. 32, xviii. 8, 9.

3.—That Peter would deny Him.

Matt. xxvi. 34, Mark xiv. 30, Luke xxii. 31 to 34, John xiii. 38. Matt. xxvi. 75, Mark xiv. 72, Luke xxii. 60 to 62, John xviii. 27.

4.—That He should suffer.

Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 22, 23, xx. 18, 19, Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 33, 34, Luke ix. 22, xviii. 31 to 33. Matt. xxvi. 4, 66, xxvii. 26, 35, Mark xiv. 1, 64, Luke, xxii. 2, 63, xxiii. 24, 33, xxiv. 6, 7, 26, 46, John xi. 53, xix. 16, 18, Acts ii. 23, xiii. 27, xvii. 3, Gal. iii. 1.

5.—That He should suffer at Jerusalem.

Matt. xvi. 21, xx. 18, Luke ix. 31, xiii. 31, 33, xviii. 31. Matt. xxvii., Mark xv., Luke xxiii., xxiv. 18, John xix., Acts xiii. 27, Heb. xiii. 12

6.—That He should suffer by the Chief Priests.

Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 12, Mark viii. 31, x. 33, Luke ix. 22. Matt. xxvi. 3, 4, 57, 65, 66, xxvii. 1, 41 to 43, Mark xiv. 63, xv. 1, Luke xxiii. 13, 18, xxiv. 20, John xi. 53, xviii. 13, ~~14~~ 24.

7.—That He should suffer by the Gentiles.

PROPHECY.

FULFILMENT.

Matt. xx. 18, 19, Mark x. 33, Matt. xxvii. 1, Mark xv. 1, 15,
Luke xviii. 31, 32. Luke xxiii. 24, John xviii.
31, 32, Acts iv. 27, xiii. 28.

8.—That He should be mocked.

Mark ix. 12, x. 34, Luke xvii. Matt. xxvi. 67, 68, xxvii. 29,
25. Mark xiv. 65, xv. 17, 18,
19, 29 to 32, Luke xxiii.
11, John xix. 2.

9.—That He should be crucified.

Matt. xx. 19, John iii. 14, Matt. xxvii. 31, Mark xv. 24,
viii. 28, xii. 32. 25, Luke xxiii. 33, xxiv. 6,
7, 20, John xix. 16, Acts
ii. 23, iv. 10, 1 Cor. i. 23,
Gal. iii. 1.

10.—He foretold His Resurrection.

Matt. xxvii. 62, 63, Mark viii. Matt. xxviii. 6, 9, 11, Luke
31, x. 34, Luke iv. 22, John xxiv. 5 to 15, 23, 34, 36,
ii. 19, 21, x. 17. John xx. 14, 19, 27, xxi. 4,
Acts i. 3, ii. 32, iv. 33, x.
40, 41, xviii. 3, xxvi. 23,
Rom. i. 4, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

11.—He foretold that He would appear again to His disciples.

Matt. xxvi. 32, xxviii. 10, Matt. xxvii. 16, 17, Mark
Mark xiv. 28, xvi. 7, John xvi. 14, Luke xxiv. 36, John
xvi. 16, 22. xx. 19, xxi. 1, 1 Cor. xv.
5, 6.

12.—He foretold His Ascension into Heaven.

John vi. 62, vii. 33, xiv. 19, Mark xvi. 19, Luke xxiv. 51,
xvi. 28, xvii. 13, xx. 17. Acts i. 9, 10, Eph. iv. 10,
1 Tim. iii. 16, Heb. iv. 14.
vi, 20, ix. 24, 1 Pet. iii. 22,

13.—He foretold the descent of the Holy Ghost after His Ascension.

PROPHECY.

Matt. x. 20, Luke vi. 13, xii. 12, xxiv. 49, John vii. 39, xiv. 16, 17, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7 to 15, xx. 22, Acts i. 8.

FULFILMENT.

Acts ii. 1 to 4, 33, iv. 8, 31, v. 31, 32, vii. 55, viii. 15, 16, 17, ix. 17, x. 44, xiii. 9, xv. 8, 28, xix. 6, xx. 22, 23, 28, xxi. 1, 4, 11, Rom. viii., xv. 13, 1 Cor. ii. 10 to 16, iii. 16, 17, vi. 11, 19, xii. 3 to 13, 2 Cor. v. 5, Gal. iii. 3, v. 16, 17, 18, 22 to 25, Eph. ii. 18, 22, iv. 4, 30, 1 Thess. i. 5, 6, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2 Tim. i. 14, Tit. iii. 5, 6, Heb. iv. 4, Rev. i. 10, ii. 7, xiv. 13, xxii. 17.

THE END.

